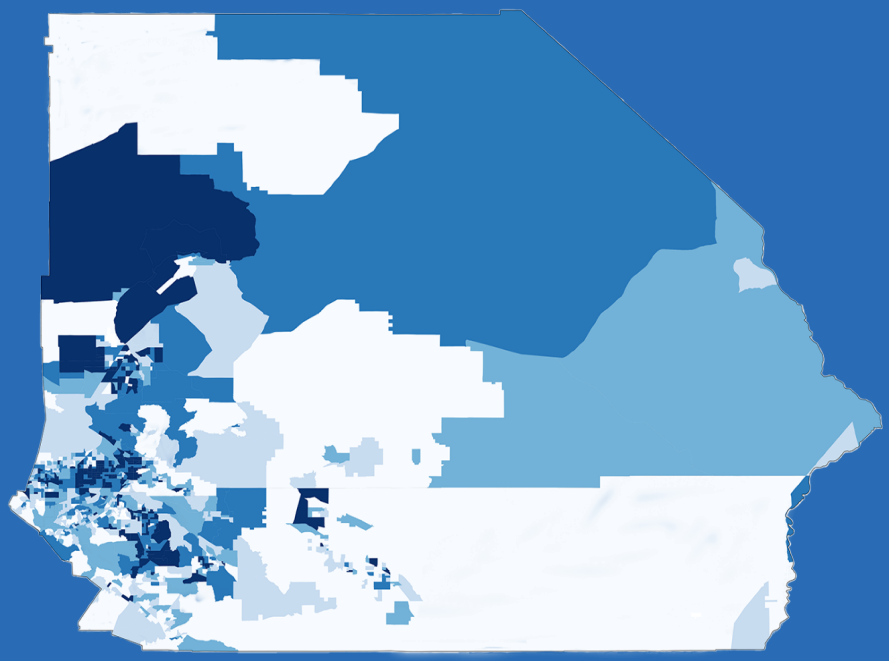
The State of Work in the Inland Empire Part II



Pandemic, Polarization, Inflation, & Investment

NOVEMBER 2023

UC RIVERSIDE | Inland Empire Labor and Community Center

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a snapshot of the labor market and working conditions in the Inland Empire (IE). We document how changes over the last five years, including those related to investment, inflation, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted workers' employment outcomes, working conditions, and well-being. This analysis marries diverse perspectives from personal narratives from workers collected through in-depth interviews (collected in English and Spanish) with a vast array of quantitative data on labor market conditions.

Key Findings

First, with a median personal annual income of $36,747 in 2022, most jobs in the IE pay incomes that are insufficient for raising a family (Glasmier 2023; Center for Women's Welfare 2023). Regional inequalities in employment and earnings persist. In nearly all industries, average earnings in the IE are lower across industries relative to the state and other Southern California counties. Jobs in higher paying industries are also less common in the IE while jobs in lower paying industries are more prevalent in the IE in comparison to the state and other Southern California counties. There is unequal access to good jobs by region, race, and gender. Within the region, inequalities based on educational attainment, race, immigration status, and gender further persist in terms of earnings as well as rates of poverty and unemployment.

Second, we find that the impacts of and recovery since the pandemic-related recession has been uneven. Overall, job growth in the IE has outpaced job growth in other regions and job postings were remarkably resilient during and after the COVID-19 recession. However, job growth has been concentrated in industries, especially transportation and warehousing, that tend to provide low-wage jobs. Other industries (or sectors) were harder hit by the pandemic-related recession and still recovering from this or declining in employment over time. Although unemployment rates remain higher among those without BA degrees, unemployment levels among those with BA degrees have not recovered from the pandemic-related recession to the same extent as for workers without BA degrees.

Finally, earnings have increased and poverty has declined since 2017. Housing costs, however, have risen more than wages and many workers in the region are

unable to afford housing and experience overcrowded housing or other housing problems. There has been a rise in earnings inequality since 2006 and though it has fluctuated in the intervening years, it appears to be rising again. Poverty rates remain relatively high in San Bernardino, and just above the poverty rates during the recession that began in 2007 in the US, California, and Riverside. Within the IE, there are also geographic disparities too, with higher concentrations of poverty found in the City of Chino, northeast Riverside/west of Highgrove, in the high desert region of San Bernardino County, and in the Coachella Valley.

The findings of this report underscore the importance of expanding and improving investments in higher paying jobs and in educational and skill training opportunities in the IE. A spectrum of policy options is suggested to address this, notably advocating for increased public investments in public higher education, High Road Training Partnerships between training centers and high road employers, broadening apprenticeship and vocational training programs, and enabling lifelong learning and reskilling. Moreover, a strong emphasis on equity and accessibility in these educational and training initiatives is deemed vital to ensure that all members of the community, irrespective of their socio-economic standings or disabilities, can participate in the economic growth of the region.

Furthermore, the report highlights the critical need for additional worker organizing and robust worker protections to safeguard the rights and welfare of workers, especially those in precarious employment conditions. The policy recommendations extend from increased protections for workers' rights, to the endorsement of living wage policies and enhanced funding for labor law enforcement. In addition, the promotion of a green economy and sustainability through policies such as green job training programs, support for clean transportation, and climate resilience planning is emphasized. Comprehensive worker support policies covering affordable housing, healthcare access, and other wrap-around services are posited as essential elements for improving the overall quality of life for workers, thereby fostering a more robust, resilient, and inclusive regional community and economy.

WORKER VOICES & PERSPECTIVES

This report includes personal narratives of workers to further reveal the everyday challenges and triumphs on the job. Our team interviewed 19 diverse workers in English or Spanish. Our sample includes workers that worked across different IE regions, from the Riverside-San Bernardino metropolitan area to the high desert. Interviewees varied in age, gender, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, educational attainment, employment status, and occupation. These interviews offer a window into what workers appreciate and struggle with, enriching our understanding of both IE workers and job quality with genuine, lived experiences.

KEY FACTS

IE POPULATION IS 52% LATINO & 21% IMMIGRANTS

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE IE: 1,582,651 JOBS

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OF 12% IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

83% INCREASE IN TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING JOBS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

14% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WORKERS WITH A BA DEGREE OR ABOVE

42% INCREASE IN NOMINAL WAGES AND 65% INCREASE IN RENTAL PRICES

Data Sources: Author's analysis of QWI, ACS & HUD PD&R data

A BRIEF ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE INLAND EMPIRE

The IE, which includes both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, has a growing workforce. Like other workers around the world, those in the IE experienced many upheavals related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this report, we explore the current employment outcomes and working conditions in the region, how the labor market has changed over the past five years, and strategies for improving them through policy changes and other regional initiatives.

This report, produced in collaboration by researchers affiliated with UCR's Center for Social Innovation (CSI) and UCR's new IE Labor and Community Center (IELCC), builds upon previous research on the regional economy by the authors and CSI. In particular, we seek to update the findings from CSI's (2018) The State of Work in the Inland Empire report and CSI's (2021) Good Jobs in the Inland Empire: Economic Recovery and Resilience report.

Before we look ahead, it is important that we note the economic evolution of the IE which has created the foundation of where we are today. The following section offers a brief economic history of the region.

Agricultural Beginnings

In its infancy, the region witnessed Native Americans engaging in small-scale agriculture. The Spanish colonial period marked the introduction of European crops, like oats and mustard, which became dominant by the 1920s as white settlers took land away from Native Americans and Mexican rancheros. The region's agricultural base further solidified with irrigation innovations in the 1870s and 1880s, which further facilitated the shift from ranching to specialized farming, notably citrus, grapes, and other crops (Patterson, 2015).

Transportation and Construction Booms

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in the late 19th century played a pivotal role in the region's economic trajectory. The region's growth was propelled by transportation advancements and the establishment of irrigation networks . It also witnessed an influx of settlers, usually from eastern and midwestern states who were attracted by the "California Dream," leading to the rise of towns catering to new residents and tourists (Patterson, 2015).

Wartime Manufacturing & Industrialization

The 20th century heralded the region's transformation into an industrial hub. The establishment of military installations in the World War II era boosted employment, with the military personnel influx increasing the demand for housing and retail. Manufacturing also diversified, producing building materials, electronics, and military equipment (Patterson, 2015).

Shifts and Declines

The mid to late 20th century witnessed a decline in traditional economic sectors. Citrus farming reached its zenith by the mid-1940s, facing challenges from diseases and pollution. The subsequent decades experienced factory closures, military base reductions, and agricultural downturns (Patterson, 2015). However, higher education institutions and healthcare facilities like Loma Linda University Medical Center emerged as significant employers (Center for Social Innovation 2018; Loma Linda University Health 2018).

Modern Economy

The more recent years have seen the IE's economy diversifying further. Amidst factory and military base closures of the 1970s and 1990s, the region witnessed a rise in transportation and warehousing, connecting it to international trade and catering to the logistics needs of the Southern California regional economy (Patterson, 2015). These shifts, combined with the lure of affordable housing, led to increasing numbers who now call the region home. Many, however, now commute to coastal counties for work (Center for Social Innovation 2018).

Recent Developments

The COVID-19 pandemic's ramifications on the regional economy and labor sectors are profound. While certain sectors faced significant downturns, niches like home-delivery retail and associated transportation and warehousing sectors saw exponential growth. Presently, the region's top employing industries include healthcare and social assistance, responding to its burgeoning populace's needs, and a robust logistics industry, encompassing transportation and warehousing. Additionally, over eight percent of jobs are concentrated in retail trade, accommodation and food services, and educational services, reflecting growth in the K-12 school system and academia.

From a demographic lens, the IE boasts a vast, growing, and progressively diverse populace, most of which is Latino. While there has been an increase in educational achievement, the region still trails behind Southern

California, the state, and nation in the share of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher.

DATA ANALYSIS & METHODOLOGY

This report employs a mixed-methods approach, weaving together both quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide a holistic perspective on the state of work in the Inland Empire. For the quantitative analysis, we use a range of publicly available datasets that offer insights into workforce trends, employment conditions, earnings, and other pertinent labor market indicators. These datasets form the backbone of our empirical analysis, ensuring that our findings are both robust and reflective of the current economic landscape. Complementing this, our qualitative research delves into the lived experiences of workers in the region. Through in-depth interviews, we have sought to capture the narratives, challenges, aspirations, and perspectives of individuals, providing a human dimension to statistical analysis.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The following section dives deep into quantitative analysis, laying out the data-driven insights that shape our understanding of the labor market in the IE. It is broken down into three parts: Part 1: The Workforce, Employment & Jobs, and Inequities; Part 2: Employment Changes: Pandemic and Polarization; Part 3: Earnings, Inequality, and Economic Well-Being.

PART 1: THE WORKFORCE, EMPLOYMENT & JOBS, AND INEQUITIES

Part 1 – "Workforce, Employment & Jobs, and Inequities" – offers an in-depth analysis of the current workforce composition, the dynamics of employment and job opportunities, and the persistent disparities that exist within these parameters. Recognizing that the labor market is multifaceted, our examination also sheds light on the underlying inequities that certain segments of the workforce face. This comprehensive approach helps to provide a snapshot of the present situation but also sets the stage for a meaningful discourse on policy recommendations and future prospects.

Race & Immigrant Status

The IE is diverse, with Latinos making up the largest share of the population. Figure 1 shows the composition of the IE population by self-identified race or ethnicity. Figure 1 shows that about 52% of the population is Latino, which is notably higher than the percentages found in Southern California, the state, and the nation. Approximately 30% are non-Latino White alone, about 7% are non-Latino Asian and Pacific Islanders alone, nearly 7% are non-Latino Black alone, approximately 3% are non-Latino two or more races, with non-Latino Native American alone and 'other' at less than 1% each.

According to the ACS, about 21% of the IE population are immigrants, of which about 11% are naturalized citizens and about 10% are non-citizens.[1] While the IE population has a higher share of people who are native born (79%) than the rest of the Southern California region (72%) and state (73%), it has a significantly higher share of naturalized citizens and non-citizen foreign born people than the US as a whole; about 86% of the US residents are native-born. As Figure 2 illustrates, the highest percentages of naturalized citizens and non-citizen immigrants are Latinos and non-Latino API alone.

Educational Attainment

Despite the presence of several institutes of higher education, the population of the IE has lower educational attainment than the surrounding region, the rest of California, and the nation. The share of both women and men with a BA or above is 12 to 13 percentage points lower in the IE than in the other geographies. It is worth noting that for all geographies, the share of women with a BA or above is 3 to 5 percentage points higher than that of men.

Furthermore, there are significant inequalities in educational attainment within the region, particularly across race. Since workers with a college degree or higher tend to have higher employment rates and earn more than those without college degrees, such inequalities in educational attainment contribute to racial inequalities in labor market outcomes. As Figure 4 illustrates, most working age adults in the region lack a college degree. Non-Latino Asian Pacific Islanders are the only racial/ethnic group in which a majority of working age adults have a college degree. Latinos are by far the most under-represented among those with a college degree, at less than 7.6%. As is the case across the country, women have surpassed men in educational attainment in the IE, a fact that is important to keep in mind when considering wage differentials by gender.

Employment

We also see significant inequalities in workers' ability to find jobs. Figure 5 illustrates the unemployment rate and employment to population ratio by region and educational attainment. Examining differences in the unemployment rate shows the percentage of working age people who are unable to find work among those who are actively working or looking for work. Here, we

WORKER PROFILES

LAILA

County: Riverside **Age:** 30s

Occupation: Home-based childcare worker

Laila is a high school graduate in her thirties who is a married mother of three living in Moreno Valley with her children and her husband. She also provides financial support in partnership with her grandparents for her niece and nephew. She is a licensed loctician (hair stylist for people with dreadlocks) and a childcare worker at a home-based childcare center.

She and her husband are supporting their family with a combined income of $80,000. Laila's small business supplements her income as a childcare provider. She rents a space in a local hair salon where she sees her clients. Laila has worked for a staffing agency briefly in the region and also spent some time in 2012 working as a warehouse worker in an Amazon facility in San Bernardino. She hated the work and felt like they treated workers like robots, the work was physically grueling, and her long work hours, which involved working at night and sometimes overtime, meant that her family was asleep by the time she got home. Laila is currently pursuing a business degree with a private, online college to help her build up her hair styling business more quickly. Doing so without business training has been very difficult and slow.

As a childcare worker without a union, Laila earns approximately $270 to $300 a week. She shared that she wishes society valued childcare more and that they could receive higher wages. She described the burden of not being able to meet monthly bill payments. She is grateful that her employer provides some sick time, and she does have access to healthcare through the county but would appreciate other key benefits like retirement benefits. When asked how she would improve the sector she shared that the youth would benefit from a trained "support team" for children with behavioral issues and learning disabilities. Although she doesn't get paid much, she enjoys working with toddlers, which "keeps [her] young."

When she was asked what she wants for her children she explained, "I want them to follow their dreams, not my dreams for them... But I'm also gonna throw in my advice.... Go into the NFL. If you last 15 or 20 years, great. If you go in, you don't like it - let's do something else. You know, but follow a trade, your degree, opening your own business, like whatever it is, do it if that's what you truly want to do."

WORKER PROFILES

ELI

County: Riverside **Age:** Late 30s

Occupation: Gig Delivery Driver

Eli was a gig delivery driver for a few food delivery service companies for almost five years in Riverside County. He lives by himself in a trailer and receives public benefits to help pay his bills. Eli liked the ability to work without having to answer to a direct supervisor. On a good day, he made around $30 an hour, but his pay was highly unpredictable. Eli worked before and after California Assembly Bill (AB) 5 was passed, which classified some app-based drivers employed by large companies as employees rather than independent contractors. Before AB5, Eli would receive a flat rate for each order and had to pay for his own gas mileage. After AB5 was passed, he was paid hourly at minimum wage,provided a mileage stipend, and he became eligible for other labor rights provided to employees. Eli's employers failed to support him when he experienced work-related injuries. For example, Eli got attacked by two dogs while working and needed medical care for both attacks. Since he was classified as an independent contractor at the time, the companies offered him little support, and he handled his medical needs through MediCAL. This year, Eli stopped delivering food orders because he received too few orders and the job no longer paid well. Consequently, Eli is currently unemployed and looking for work.

SANTIAGO

County: Riverside **Age:** Early 30s

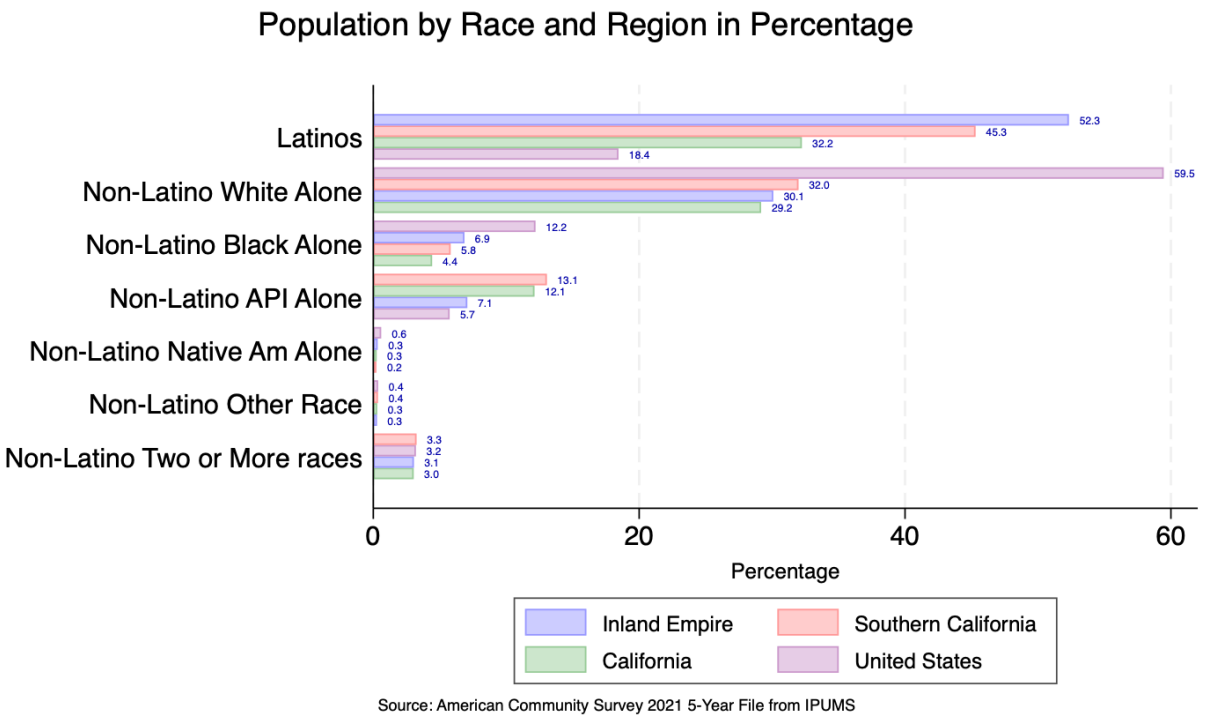
Occupation: Landscaper (currently self-employed)

Santiago migrated from Mexico to the United States, seeking better opportunities but soon recognized his career potential was constrained due to his undocumented status. He joined his older siblings in a small desert city in Riverside County in 2016. He faced limited job opportunities given his educational background and immigrant status. Fortunately, connections through his sister helped him secure a landscaping job. Santiago found himself working long hours in extreme heat for very little pay and no benefits however, which he attributes to a consequence of his immigration status. He described how many employers take advantage of people's immigration status to offer low wages. He earned about $100 to $120 a day, working overtime without additional pay, and lacks paid sick days and vacations.

After his request for a mere $5 pay raise led to his dismissal, Santiago launched his own landscaping venture. Though he grapples with financial instability—especially during rainy seasons—he manages up to 15 homes daily during the scorching summer, with temperatures sometimes reaching 120°F. The job comes with its health hazards, from heat exposure to the risks associated with climbing tall trees, especially on windy days. Furthermore, lack of easy restroom access interrupts his workflow, forcing him to seek public facilities.

Being well aware that his language barriers, immigrant status, and limited education might deter higher-paying jobs, Santiago offers competitive rates to appeal to more clients. For example, instead of the typical $500 for palm tree trimming, he charges $350—even in windy conditions. He voices concern over the perceptions some affluent communities, like Palm Springs, have towards Latino workers, wishing they'd value the contributions, such as tree planting and air quality improvement. Santiago's landscaping business, despite its challenges, fills him with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

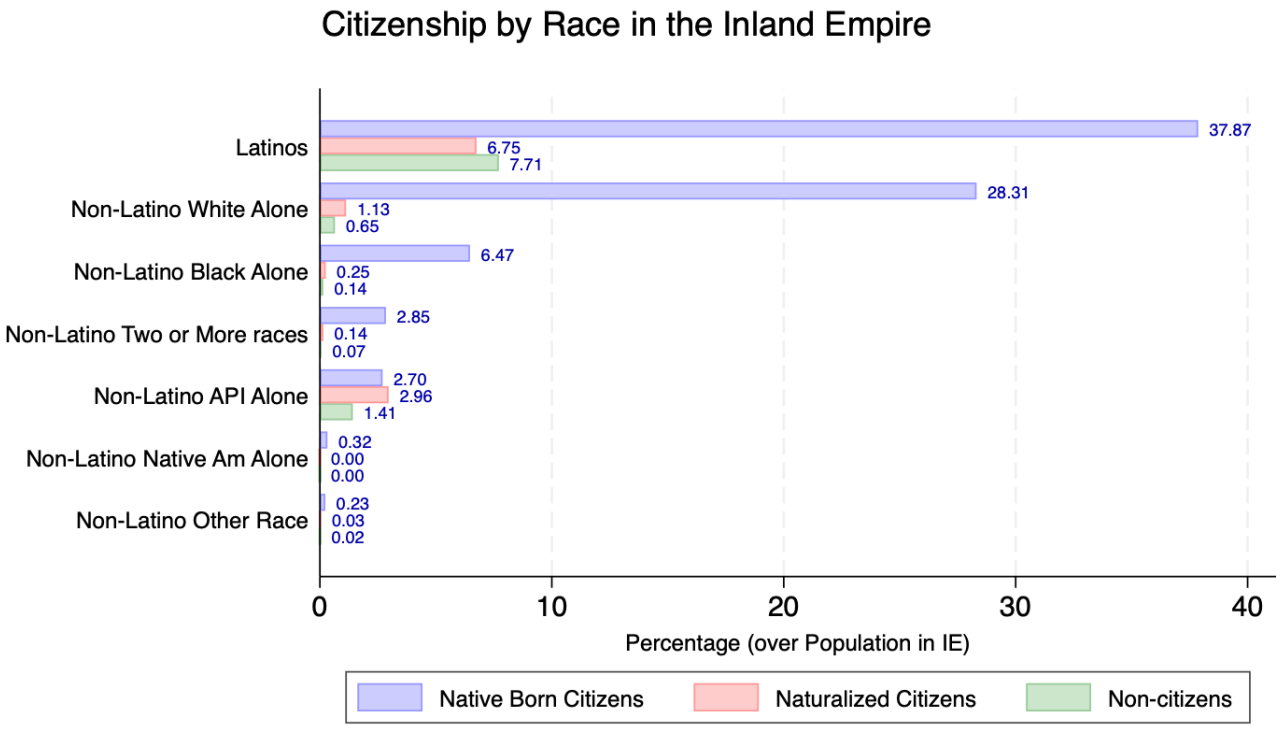
FIGURE 1



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

Note: This graph depicts the population by race in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS (2021 5-year file).

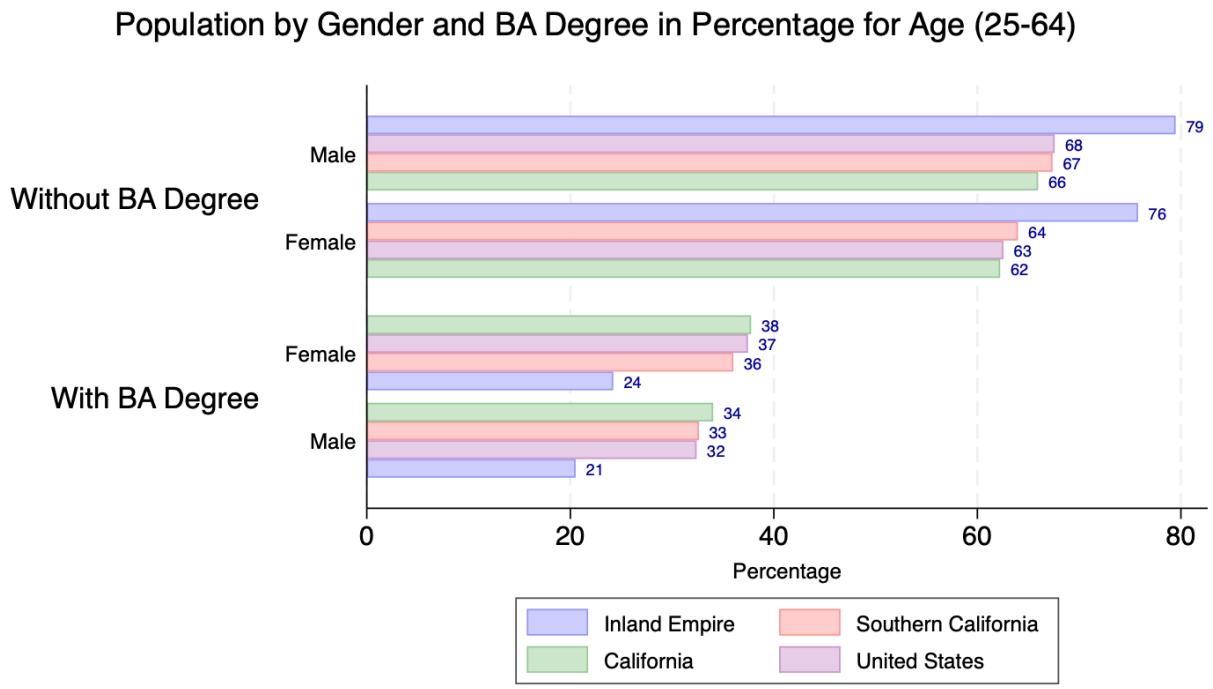
FIGURE 2



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

Note: This graph depicts the citizenship in the IE by race using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS (2021 5-year file). The variable used here is "citizen," which reports the citizenship status of foreign-born persons. In IPUMS-CPS, people born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or U.S. outlying areas were excluded from the question universe. Respondents were identified as belonging to one of three groups: citizens by virtue of being born abroad to American parents; naturalized citizens; and non-citizens.

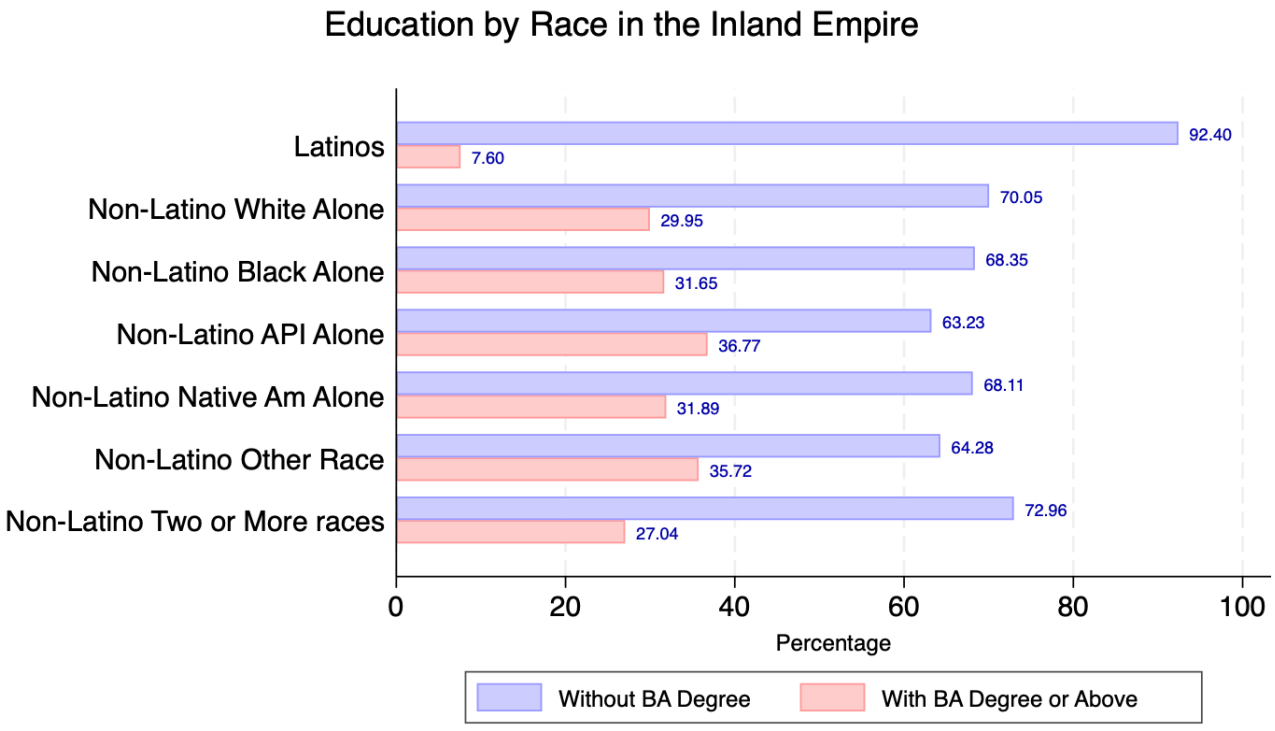
FIGURE 3



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

Note: This graph depicts the population by gender and BA degree or above those aged 25-64 in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS (2021 5-year file).

FIGURE 4



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

Note: This graph shows the percentage of residents aged 25 to 64 years old with and without a bachelor's degree or above by race in the IE using data from the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year File from IPUMS.

State of Work in the Inland Empire

see that unemployment rates are consistently higher among those without BA degrees compared to the more educated across all regions. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates that formal education tends to increase one's ability to obtain employment (e.g, see Card 1999; Riddell and Song 2011). We also observe that unemployment rates are lower in the IE in comparison to Southern California and the state. The employment to population ratio shows the share of the working-age population (age 25-64) who are working for pay, and is a particularly helpful metric as it accounts for everyone who is of working age. We see that, across all regions, the employment to population ratio is lower among those without BA degrees compared to those with them. We also observe that the employment to population ratio is lower in the IE when compared to Southern California, the state, and the nation. This could be because there are differences in peoples' job opportunities, ability and willingness to work, and their engagement in other kinds of activities, including caregiving, education, and training.

According to pooled CPS data for 2021-2023, unemployment rates in the IE are also stratified by race. These inequities may be due to racial discrimination, other systemic inequalities, including unequal access to education, or other factors. As Figure 6 shows, the unemployment rate is the highest among non-Latino Native Americans (11.8%) and non-Latino Black workers (10.9%) without BA degrees. We also see much lower employment to population ratios among non-Latino Native American workers, indicative of a dearth in job opportunities for this important population.

Sectoral Composition of Employment

The IE's employment landscape is predominantly shaped by five leading industries: Health Care and Social Assistance; Transportation and Warehousing; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; and Educational Services, which collectively employ 57% of the region's workforce according to Quarterly Workforce Indicators data from 2021-2022. The Transportation and Warehousing sector has notably flourished over the past five years, marking the most significant growth among these industries. However, a closer look at earnings reveals a disparity. Most of these dominant sectors, barring Health Care and Social Assistance and Educational Services, are characterized by relatively lower wages, with monthly earnings ranging from $2,766 to $5,518. Conversely, sectors like Utilities, Finance and insurance, Public administration, and Information, which offer higher pay, are underrepresented in the region. This situation underscores an earnings lag in the IE, where, except for the Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas sectors, average monthly earnings generally trail behind those in other Southern California counties and California at large. Within the region, Riverside County often exhibits slightly lower earnings compared to San Bernardino County across various industries (see Table 3 for details).[2]

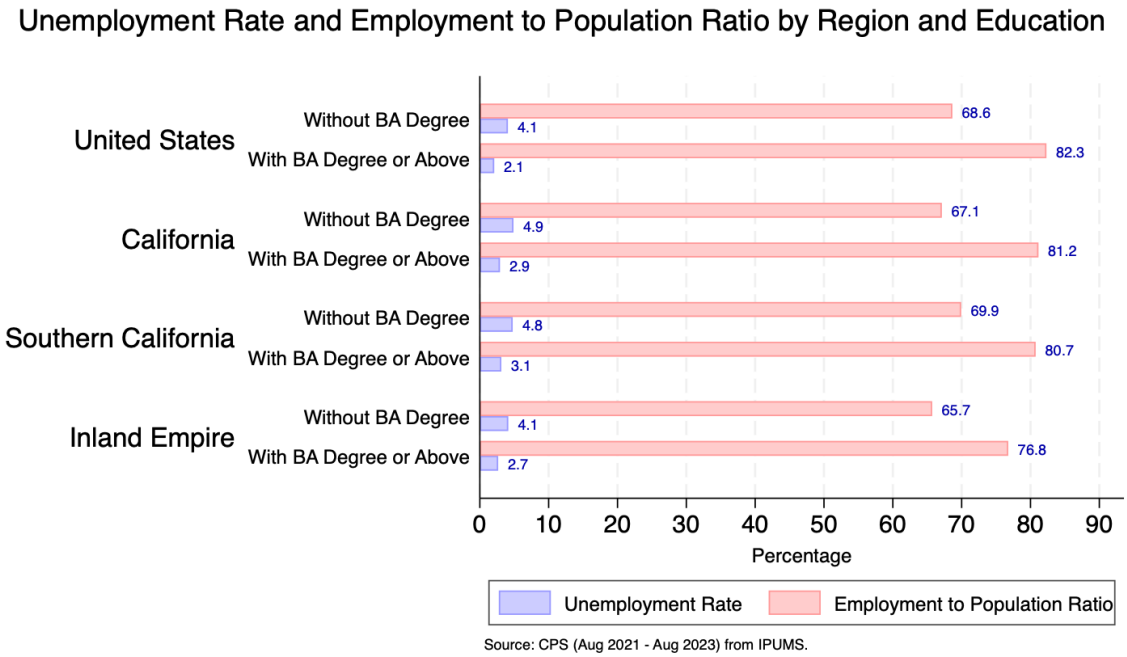
Commuting

Perhaps due to the industry composition in the IE or the lower wages within those industries, IE workers are more likely to commute out of their county of residence and spend a longer time commuting to work compared to their counterparts in the U.S., California, and Southern California. Notably, the IE stands out with the highest rate (29.7%) of employed workers commuting to other counties for work. Compared to their counterparts in other regions, employed workers in the IE also spend more time on average commuting, with an average one way commute time of about 33 minutes.[3]

Figure 7 shows the cumulative commuting time in minutes that employed workers spent traveling from home to work in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States by gender during the years 2016 to 2021, using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS. Notably, males exhibit lengthier commuting times in contrast to females in all regions. This is consistent with previous research that suggests that women's employment tends to be more spatially constrained than men's employment due to their greater caregiving responsibilities (Joassart-Marcelli 2009). Furthermore, the average one-way daily commute in the IE surpasses that of the other regions among both men and women. Doubling the average one-way commuting times shown, men in the IE have an average roundtrip commute of 72 minutes to work and back each day, compared to an average of 57 minutes among women.

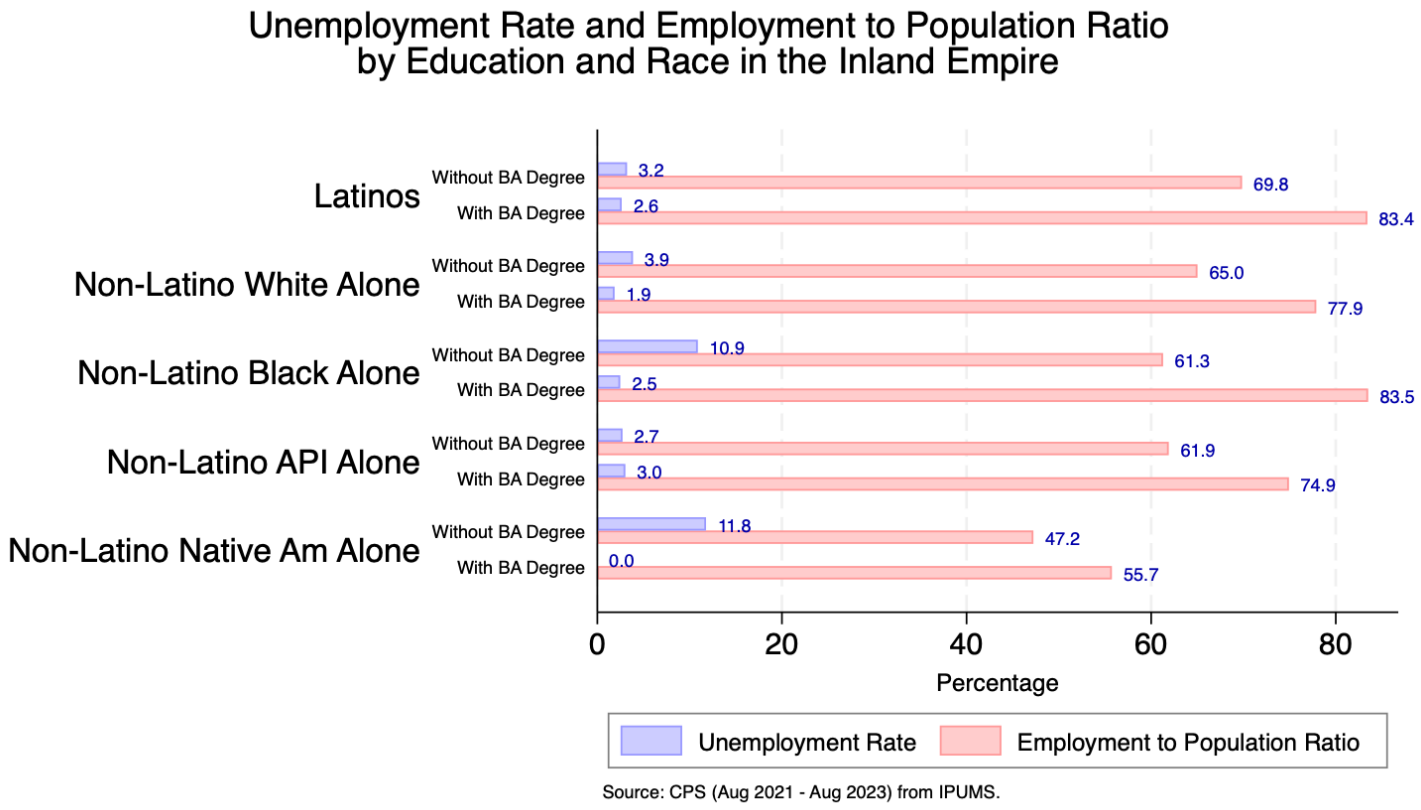
Average one-way commuting times also varied across racial groups in the IE, but only by several minutes. Blacks and other races reported the longest daily commuting times (an average of just over 35 minutes each), while Latinos workers reported the shortest commuting times (about 32 minutes).

FIGURE 5



Note: This bar graph shows the unemployment rate and employment to population ratio by BA degree for age group of 25-64 in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data sourced from the CPS (Aug 2021 – Aug 2023) provided by IPUMS.

FIGURE 6



Note: This bar graph shows the unemployment rate and employment to population ratio by BA degree and race for age group of 25-64 in the IE using data sourced from the CPS (Aug 2021 – Aug 2023) provided by IPUMS. The CPS does not include the race categories of Non-Latino Other Race and Non-Latino Two or More races.

WORKER PROFILES

ZY

County: Riverside

Age: early 20s

Occupation: Barista at Starbucks

Zy, a single woman in her early 20s, works at a unionized Starbucks in Riverside County. Born and raised in California's Central Valley, she moved to Riverside to pursue her Bachelor's degree. She is a full-time student who works part-time at Starbucks as a barista. Before that, she worked in retail and a campus job. On a "good week", when she works about 30 hours at Starbucks, Zy earns around $450 after deductions. However, she typically works 26 hours a week, only getting additional hours if other workers are unavailable. Annually, she estimates that she earns less than $30,000 after taxes. Zy mentions that she finds her income "pretty unpredictable" due to changes in her work hours and changes in pay schedules. To help pay for rent, she lives with two roommates who are also in their early 20s.

Zy explained that baristas perform many tasks, including providing customer support inside the cafe and the drive-through areas, preparing drinks, heating up food, ensuring that food is fresh, and helping to stock store inventory. She also keeps the store clean by washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms, sweeping, and mopping the floor. Sometimes workers are exposed to health and safety hazards, such as lifting heavy items and being exposed to biological hazards when they must clean up blood, fecal matter, or even drug users' needles from the bathroom.

Zy is one of the worker leaders at the only unionized Starbucks in Riverside. She helped to unionize her workplace with support from Starbucks Workers United (SWU) and even participated in SWU's Starbus Tour which traveled across the West Coast from Los Angeles to Portland. Zy stated that she "wanted to stay longer because we were paid so much better than Starbucks. They gave us $150 a day." SWU also covered workers' travel expenses and meals during this tour.

Although Zy enjoys her co-workers, she has a long list of complaints about her job. First, the store lacks first aid kits containing bandages and other supplies that California law requires employers to provide. One coworker even paid out of pocket to buy bandages for the workers. Before this, managers would just tell workers to wrap their fingers with a glove or use a napkin if they had an injury. Second, Zy described unmanageable workloads during both morning and night shifts. Managers failed to hire enough workers to meet customers' demands and complete all of their other required work tasks. They also required employees to work with broken appliances, such as broken ice machines, which increased the difficulty of their work. She also described instances of favoritism, such as a manager giving a favored worker access to an extra ice box that made their work easier. Moreover, "when there's customers that [are] harassing the baristas, she'll just kind of [let them do] what they want."

Zy also claimed that after the store became unionized, Starbucks managers retaliated against the workers in various ways that were "intentionally making our lives harder." First, they removed security from the store, claiming they could no longer afford it. As a result, male coworkers are "forced into being pseudo security guards, but then they're not getting paid for that" nor do they receive sufficient training for that role. After the workers successfully carried out a strike related to the unionization of their shop, Zy describes how managers retaliated by implementing stricter dress code policies and enforcing work schedules in questionable ways. In particular, managers implemented a separate written timesheet outside of the clock-in system through which they sometimes wrongly added minutes to their tardiness. Starbucks Workers United has filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) complaint in response.

ALEXANDER

County: San Bernardino **Age:** Early 40s

Occupation: Radiologist

Alexander, in his early 40s, is a board certified radiologist working in a federally funded hospital in San Bernardino County. Prior to becoming a radiologist, Alexander was inspired by his father, who is a surgeon, to become a doctor. But while in medical school, he realized he did not want to work long and unpredictable hours, from early in the morning to late at night due to being called in during emergencies. Instead, Alexander became a radiologist, which tends to have more reasonable and predictable work schedules than doctors.

Along with performing fluoroscopy exams, Alexander enjoys being able to collaborate with multiple doctors within the hospital to create a treatment plan for patients, and learning from their specialties. Alexander also enjoys teaching courses and guiding current resident students in medical school. This federally owned hospital also provides Alexander with good employment benefits, including 26 days off in addition to federal holidays and 12 paid sick days annually, health insurance, pension, and a 401k retirement plan. He also receives a small stipend to continue his medical education so that he can learn new procedures, new technologies, and other advancements in the field.

On the other hand, while radiologists do not directly interact with patients very much, it is still emotionally difficult to witness patients being diagnosed with severe illnesses, such as cancer. As he describes, "you feel kind of sad and that can be very emotionally draining." Radiologists are also pressured to perform multiple scans and reports for the emergency room and are often under pressure to work very quickly. Due to problems with understaffing, Alexander, along with many doctors, are required to request vacation time four to six months in advance, and a year prior if they want vacation time during holidays. Despite these concerns, Alexander continues to enjoy many aspects of his career, especially seeing the positive impacts of his work on patients' health.

PAUL

County: Riverside **Age:** 30s

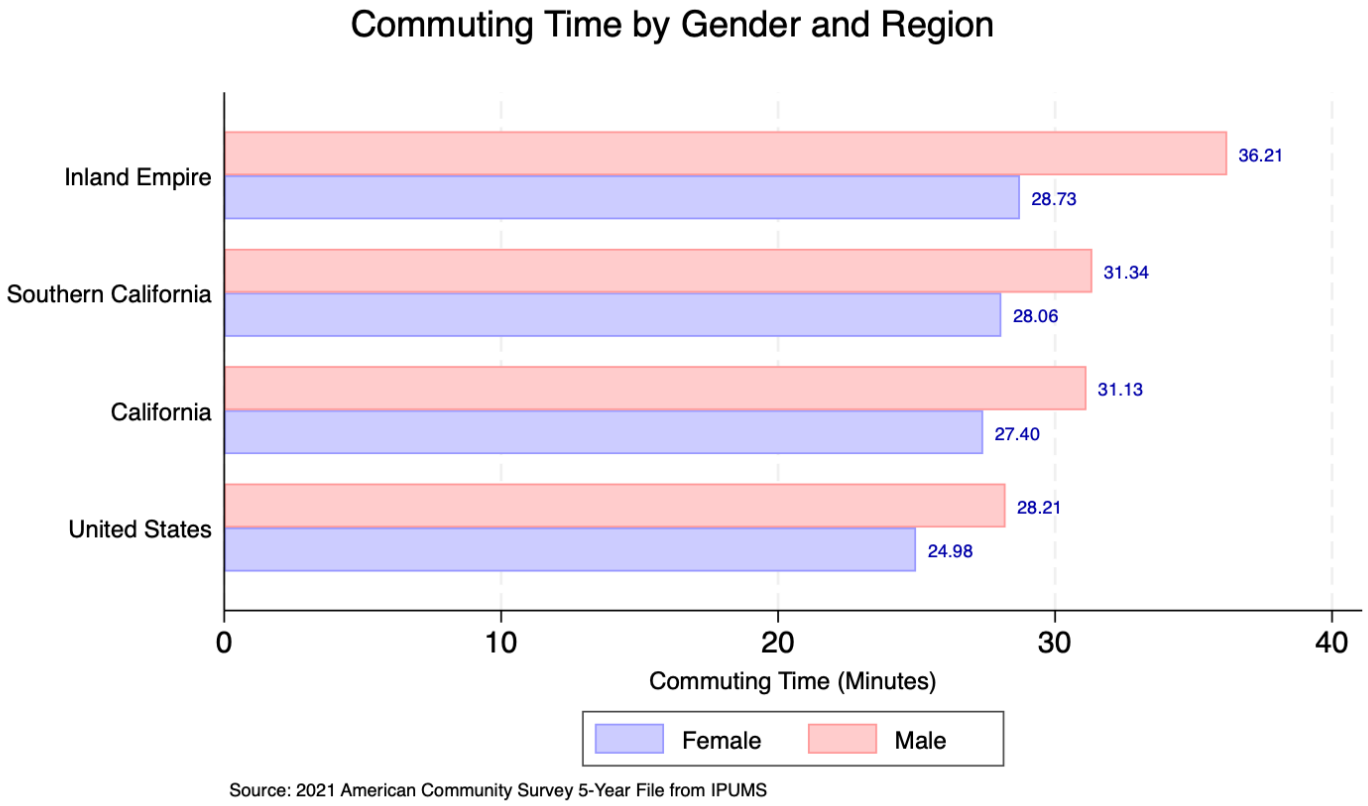
Occupation: Social Services Case Manager

Paul, in his 30s, has worked multiple social service jobs in the IE and currently works as a case manager in Riverside County. Having a self-described "rough childhood" with parents suffering from drug addictions, Paul chose social work to help the community, especially children facing difficult circumstances similar to those of his past. Paul has a Bachelor's degree, and his current job is the "highest paying job he's ever had with his degree." He enjoys this job, which provides him with great work-life balance. His managers have been very supportive of his needs, goals, and mental health. He doesn't worry about work nor does he take work home with him. His current job contrasts sharply with his previous job, which he left due to extreme stress.

Paul previously worked as a case manager for a non-profit organization in the IE, which had a work environment that was "extremely toxic." According to Paul, the job provided low pay and poor benefits compared to other social service occupations. Having received little training prior to starting the job (in the form of online modules), he often had to figure out how to do his job by himself with little support from management. He often had to work overtime without overtime pay. He would receive compensation in the form of flex time, but management dictated which days he could take off, which seemed unfair.

Paul was also a frequent observer and receiver of workplace discrimination. Being one of few men in a female-dominated office, he would often hear phrases such as "I hate all men" or "all men are stupid," which made him feel uncomfortable. He would also hear negative racialized opinions about clients and the Black Lives Matter movement which made his workplace feel unwelcoming and unsafe. Moreover, Paul, who was Latino, was often written up by his managers for being "too aggressive" which he did not understand and believed to be discriminatory. Paul felt like he was constantly walking on eggshells, and constantly feared losing his job. Eventually, Paul left his previous job and found his current job. Overall, Paul feels that his current job as a case manager is fulfilling and meaningful, and he is happy with how it enables him to pay his bills.

FIGURE 7



Note: This graph depicts the cumulative commuting time in minutes that respondents spent traveling from home to work in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States by gender during the years 2016 to 2021, using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS. The variable used here is the "trantime," which reports the total amount of time, in minutes, that it usually took the respondent to get from home to work daily last week.

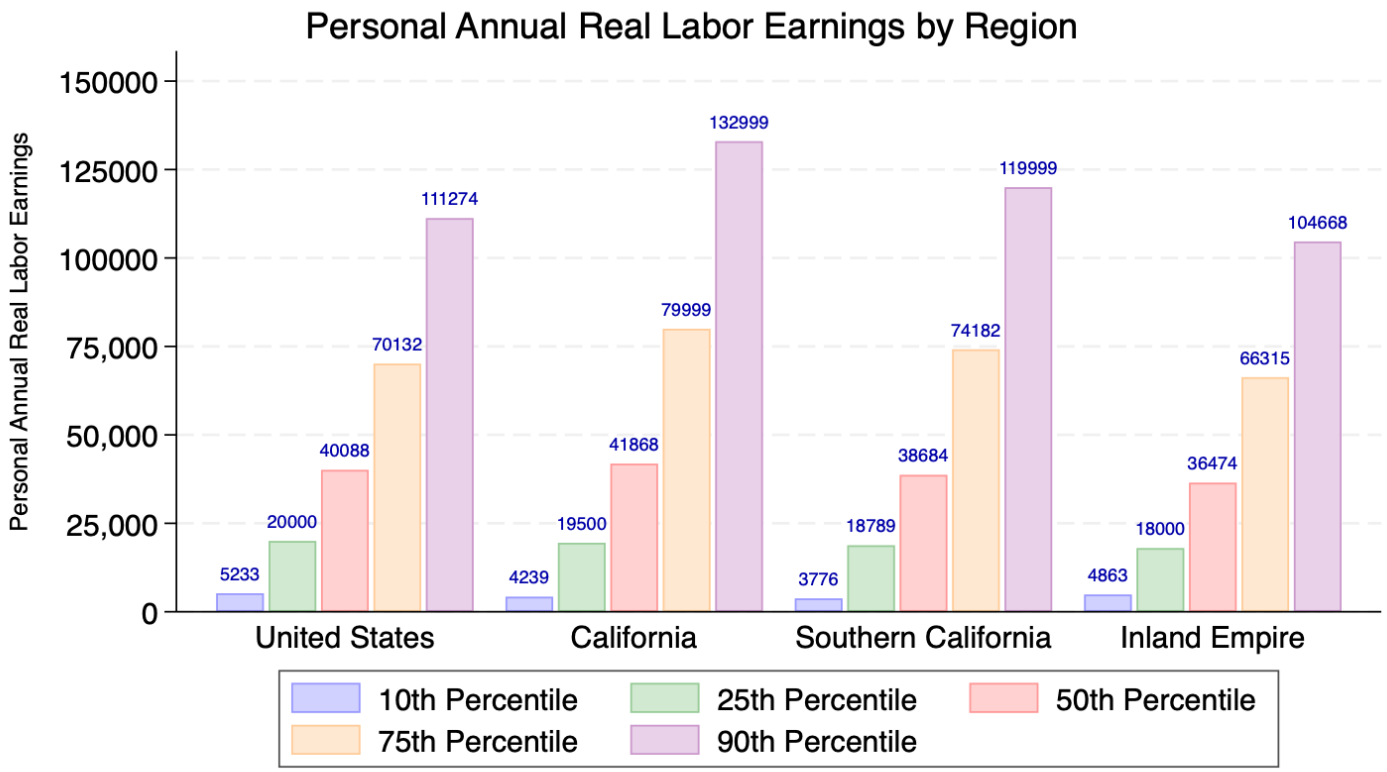
Earnings and Inequalities Among Workers Within the IE

Figure 8 shows the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles from the earnings distributions in the IE, Southern California, California and the United States. It reveals a few key takeaways. First, at every percentile, workers in the IE earn less than other workers in the region, state, and country. Second, there is an enormous spread in the annual earnings of workers in each geography. In the IE, workers at the 90th percentile make 21.5 times as much as workers at the 10th percentile and 2.9 times as much as workers at the median. These measures show that inequality in the IE is similar though slightly greater than in the nation as a whole. It also shows that inequality is greater between the top and bottom percentiles when looking at Southern California as a whole, and the state.

Along with regional inequalities, there are inequalities in labor market outcomes within the IE based on race and gender. Men have higher median annual pre-tax personal real incomes (or labor earnings) compared to women, which is consistent with the gender income inequality found in Southern California, California, and the United States.[4] These gender gaps are even more striking when we account for the fact that a higher share of women than men have BA degrees or above within each geography.

Figure 9 shows that Black people in the IE have the lowest personal median annual real labor earnings, followed by Native Americans and Latinos. Non-Latino White residents of the IE report the highest median annual real labor earnings, followed by Asian and Pacific Islanders, those identifying as two or more races, and other races. Similar patterns of racial inequality in income are found when observing median household income, although the highest median household incomes are found among Asian and Pacific Islanders, followed by whites, two or more races, and other races (as is the case nationally).[5]

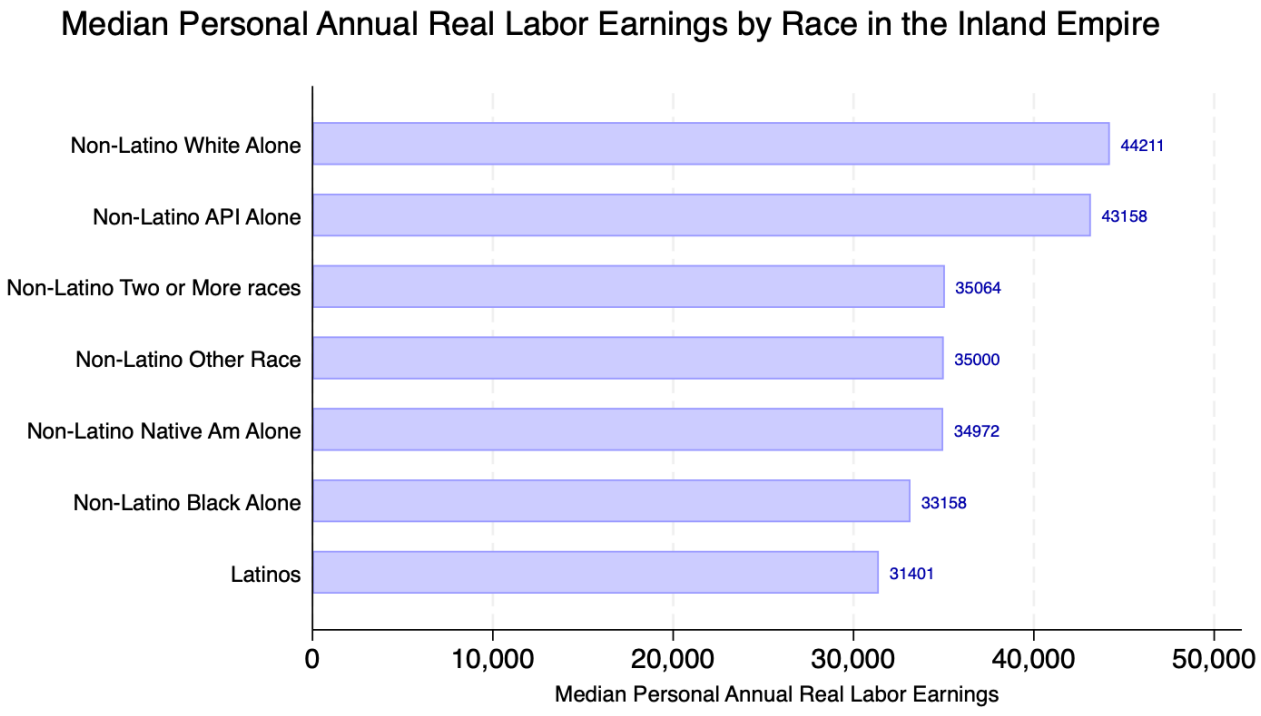
FIGURE 8



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

Note: This graph shows the personal annual income for 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentile in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data from the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year File from IPUMS. The variable used here is "incwage," which reports each respondent's total pre-tax wage and salary income - that is, money received as an employee - for the previous year. We use the CPI-deflator (CPI99) to take the values to 1999 dollars , and then convert the values to 2021 dollars. The data are limited to those who are employed and the age range is from 16 to 64.

FIGURE 9



Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS

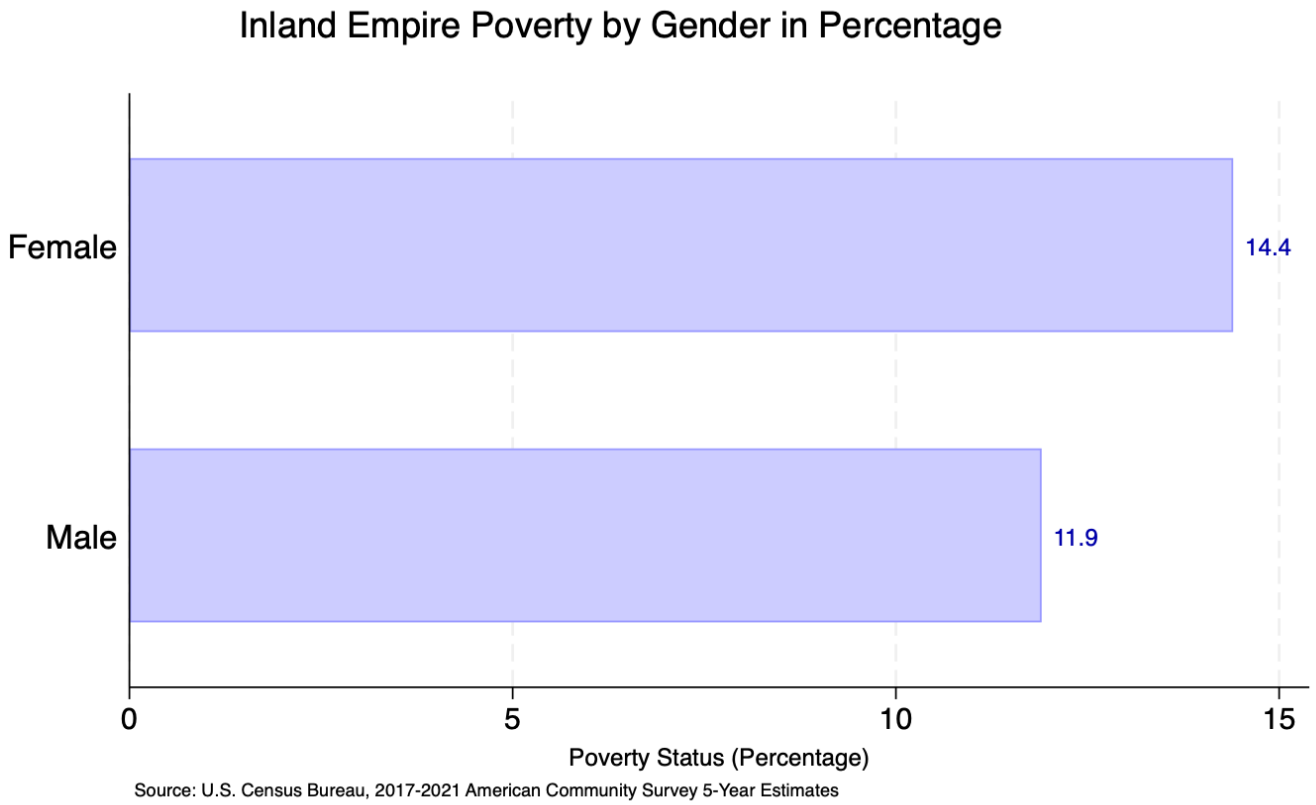
Note: This graph shows the median personal annual real labor earnings by race in the IE using data from the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year File from IPUMS. The variable used here is "incwage," which reports each respondent's total pre-tax wage and salary income - that is, money received as an employee - for the previous year. We use the CPI-deflator (CPI99) to take the values to 1999 dollars , and then convert the values to 2021 dollars. The data are limited to those who are employed and the age range is from 16 to 64.

POVERTY IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

As shown in Map 1, poverty rates vary across regions within the IE. Poverty rates are highest around the city of Chino and northeast Riverside/west of Highgrove, in the high desert communities of San Bernardino County, and in the Coachella Valley. (Note that due to how the Census Bureau draws tract boundaries in order to de-identify individual respondents, tracts in northeast San Bernardino County are very large due to small population sizes.)

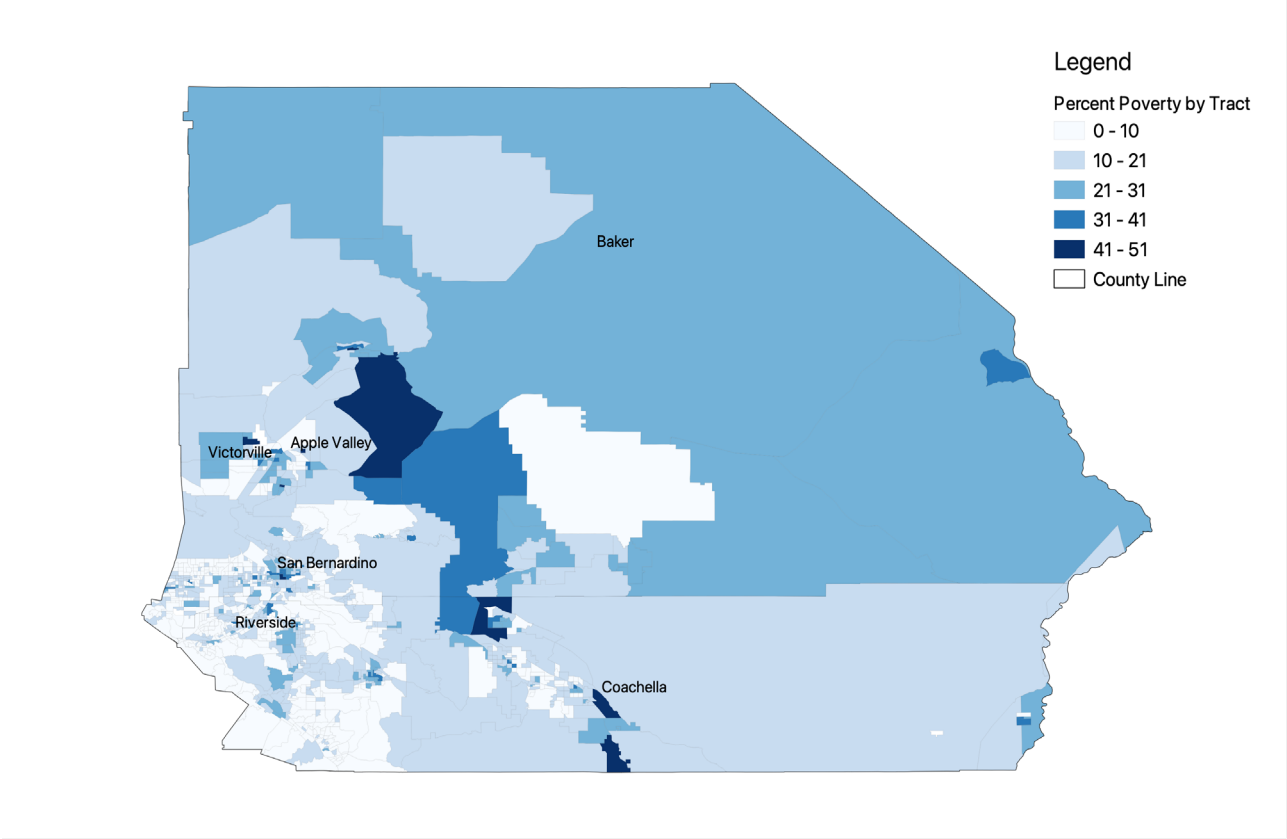
Within the IE, as elsewhere in the nation, poverty rates remain unequal by gender and race. As Figure 10 shows, poverty rates are higher among women (14.4%) than men (11.9%). Among racial groups, poverty rates are the highest among Blacks (18.4%), Native Americans (16.2%), Other (15.6%), and Latinos (14.7%); whites (10.8%) and Asians (10.5%) have the lowest rates (see Figure 11). Problems of poverty are even more common than these official measures indicate, however, as underestimation by the U.S. Census Bureau is a known issue. Most notably, this measure fails to consider how various basic costs of living vary across counties, including the cost of housing, child care, gasoline, food, and utilities, and how those costs have increased over time (Brady, Parolin, and Ross 2018).

FIGURE 10



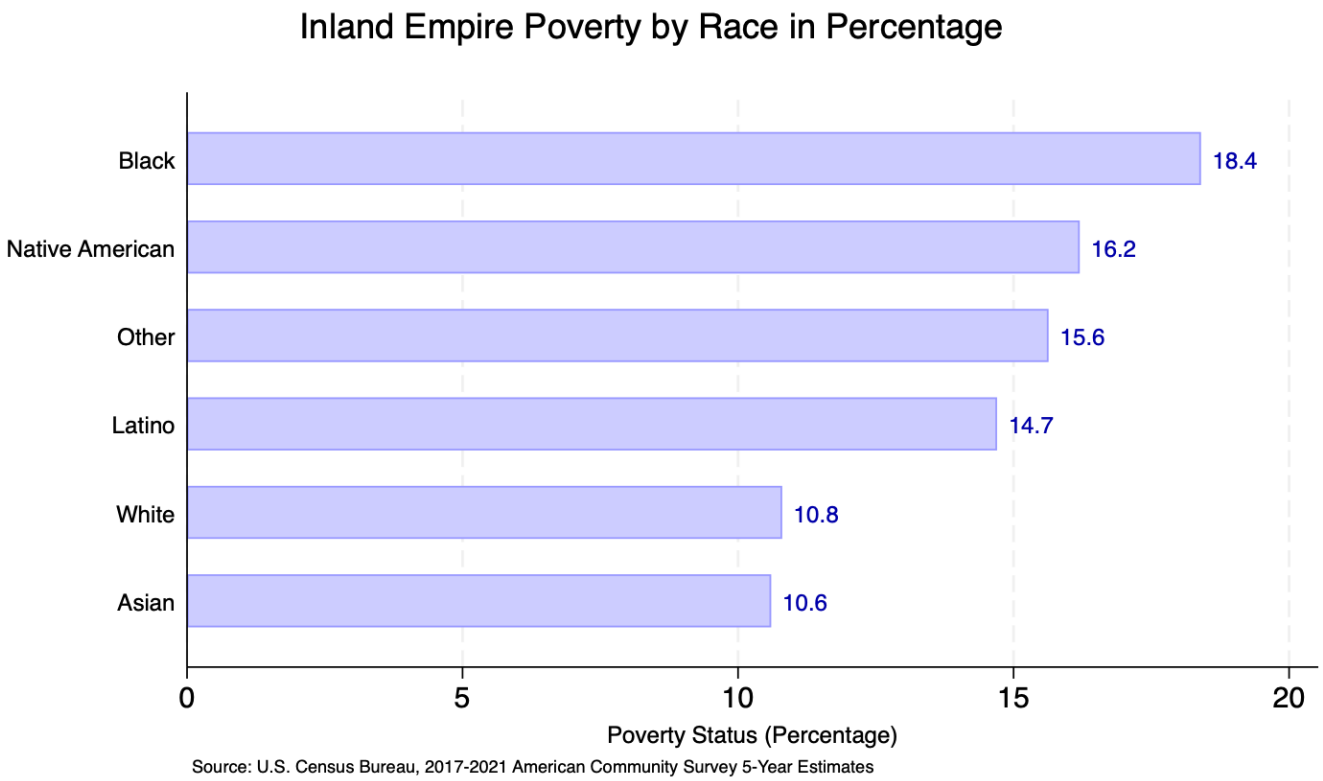
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

MAP 1 - POVERTY RATES IN THE INLAND EMPIRE



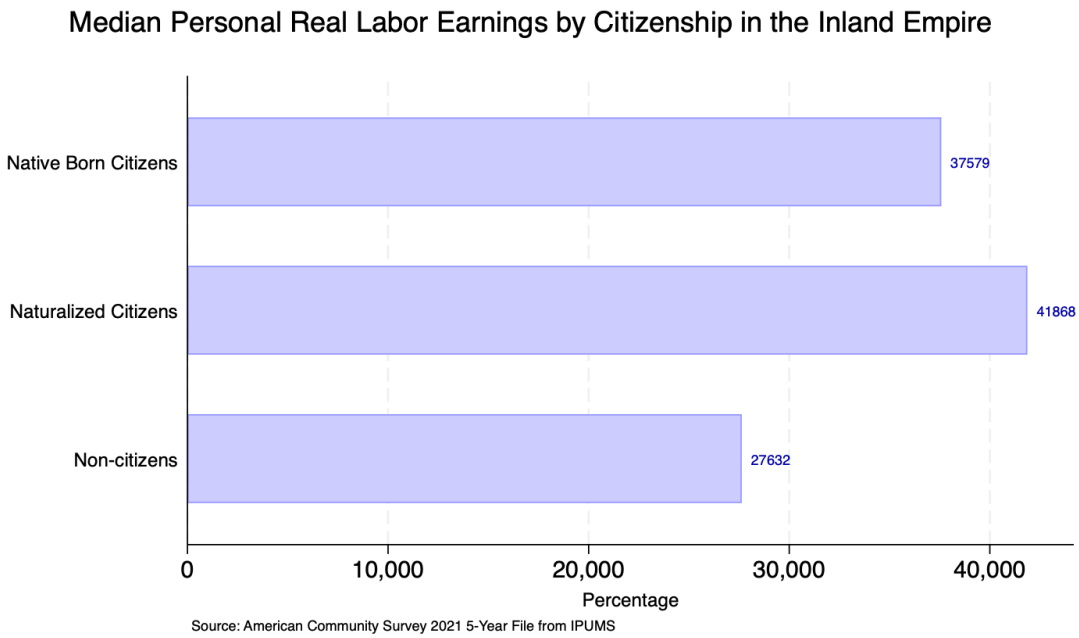
Source: ACS 2021 5-year file, IPUMS

FIGURE 11



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 12



Note: Figure 12 shows inequalities among IE workers based on citizenship using the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year File from IPUMS. The variable used here for the median personal real wage income is "incwage," which reports each respondent's total pre-tax wage and salary income - that is, money received as an employee - for the previous year. (For further details see: https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/INCWAGE#description_section). The data for calculating the median personal real wage income are limited to those who are employed and the age range is from 16 to 64.

Median Personal Earnings by Citizenship Status

Similar to the differences in poverty breakdowns by race, there are wage earnings differentials by citizenship status. Many immigrant workers, including some workers interviewed for this study, find that their employment opportunities are constrained due to their lack of citizenship status, and that employers sometimes take advantage of undocumented immigrants by paying them less. Consistent with such observations, Figure 12 shows that working age (16 to 64 years) native born citizens and naturalized citizens have higher median personal real labor earnings compared to working-age non-citizens.

Share of Good Jobs by Race and Gender and by Race and Region in 2020

Analyzing 2021 American Community Survey data, we calculated the share of employed workers with "good jobs" among all employed workers for each racial category. There are many dimensions and ways to assess and measure job quality (Kalleberg 2011). In our worker profiles and qualitative research we consider a broad range of job quality concerns among workers, including workplace health and safety, being treated with respect and dignity, as well as freedom from workplace discrimination, harassment, and employer retaliation from organizing. In this section, we build upon our prior research (CSI 2021) that emphasizes the importance of a stable, decent paying job that provides employer-sponsored health insurance. In particular, we consider a "good job" as one that meets the following four criteria:

(1) it pays a wage above the national median earnings adjusted for the local price level;

(2) it provides employer-sponsored health insurance;

(3) it offers full-time hours (35 hours or more per week); and

(4) it offers full-year employment (at least 50 weeks per year).

Our definition of a "good job" emphasizes the quality of wages and benefits, similar to those offered by other researchers (Shearer, Shah, and Gootman 2019). Yet, it includes additional criteria designed to capture workers' access to a stable job with enough (full-time) work hours to achieve economic security and earn a decent income (CSI 2021: 5). In 2020, the national median annual wage was $44,607.84 (in 2020 dollars). Adjusting for the local price level, the annual wage threshold for a "good job" in the IE is $46,633.93 (in 2020 dollars). According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, this amount is more than the estimated annual income needed to cover the basic living costs for a single person in the IE ($39,237). In this respect, it is a "good" or "decent"

income, though not likely sufficient to be fully "family supporting" (i.e., enough to cover the basic living costs of raising children or caring for other dependents).

According to the American Community Survey data analyzed, the IE has the lowest share of good jobs when compared to the Southern California region as well as to the state. By race, the IE falls below the state average for each racial group. In the IE in 2020, White employed workers have the highest share of good jobs, followed by Asian, Other races, Black, and Latino workers (see Table 1).

Except for Black workers, workers of all races in the IE have the lowest share of good jobs in comparison to the state and the other regions. A notable exception is that the good job share for Black workers is higher in the IE than in San Diego. When breaking down the data by gender, the data show that both men and women in the IE have the lowest share of good jobs when compared to each region. When we further disaggregate the data across all regions, white men have the highest percentage of employed workers with good jobs while these percentages are smallest among Latina women. Among women, Whites and Asians tend to have the highest percentage of employed workers with good jobs although this varies a bit across counties. Latinos (both male and female) tend to have the smallest percentage of workers with good jobs across all regions. Latino women in the IE have the smallest percentage of good jobs compared to other regions, while Latino men have a larger percentage of good jobs than the state average. Black men have the highest good job ratio in the IE compared to all other regions. In contrast, Asian men in the IE have the smallest percentage of employed workers with good jobs compared to other areas, while Asian women have a slightly larger percentage compared to San Diego (see Table 2).

PART 2: EMPLOYMENT CHANGES: PANDEMIC & POLARIZATION

Part 2, "Employment Changes", delves into the evolution of the region's employment landscape over the last several years — a period marked by pandemic and innovation. Navigating the complexities of a rapidly evolving labor market requires understanding its resilience, especially in the face of unforeseen economic challenges. The 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic serves as a stark reminder of how sudden economic disruptions can significantly strain regions like the IE. These disruptions can precipitate extensive harm across the community spectrum – from individual workers to small enterprises and even entire industry sectors. Certain social demographics or specific sub-regions may bear the brunt more than others due to factors like geographical concentration of specific industries or the cascading effects of localized events. Furthermore, economic downturns pose a direct threat to the fiscal stability of local and county administrations, often leading to a reduction in public social services. This contraction not only affects the community at large but can also result in significant public sector job losses. These dramatic shifts have revealed a resilience within the market but have also altered the landscape in significant ways. Here, we provide an analysis of the changes in employment, population, unemployment, and market compositions that have emerged from this tumultuous time. We aim to understand the driving factors behind these changes and the implications they hold for the region's future.

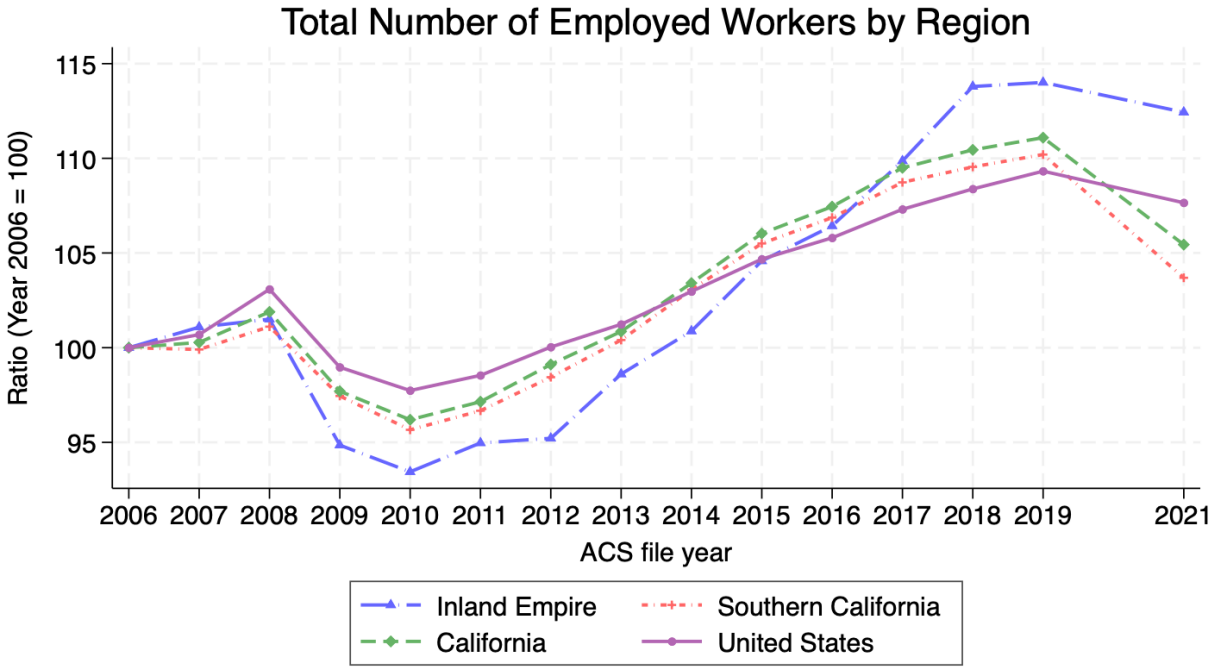
Employment, Population, and Unemployment Changes

Taking a long view, Figure 13 shows that the number of workers living in the IE has grown considerably over the last 15 years though we have experienced both expansion and contraction. As shown in Figure 13, during the Great Recession the IE had the steepest decline in the number of employed workers since 2006 compared to other regions, including Southern California, California, and the US. But after the Great Recession, the IE experienced the greatest employment increase since 2006. Although the pandemic reduced employment nationwide, the IE witnessed a smaller employment decrease than California and Southern California. Table 4 focuses on the changes in jobs over the last five years and finds similar patterns. Over the last five years, the IE has witnessed a notable 12.61% surge in the number of jobs overall employment, considerably outpacing California's growth rate of 3.95%. This significant growth in employment naturally leads to the question of what industries, occupations, and skill sets have driven this growth.

Figure 14 presents a partial answer showing that during this period of employment growth, the population of the IE grew significantly as well. Further, the largest gains were among people with a college degree, allowing the IE to begin to close the gap in educational attainment with surrounding areas.

Figure 15 examines whether the influx of educated workers contributed to the labor market by plotting the employment to population ratio by education level.. The employment-to-population ratio is a measure of the number of people employed against the total civilian working-age population, and includes individuals not

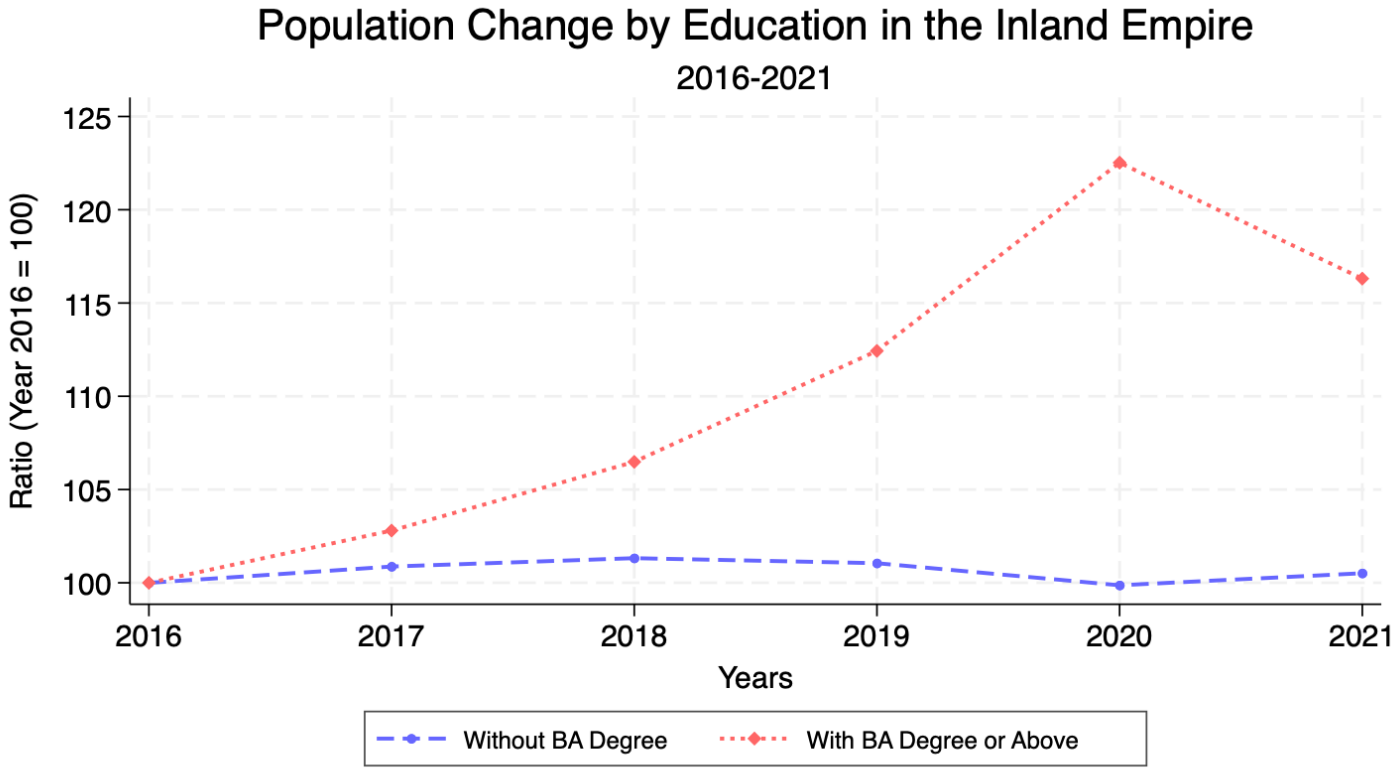
FIGURE 13



Source: 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS) from IPUMS (2006-2021)

Note: This graph shows the total number of employed workers in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data sourced from the American Community Survey provided by IPUMS (2016-2021 1-year file). ACS 2020 is dropped due to the data collection and data quality (For further details see: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sampdesc.shtml#us2020a).

FIGURE 14



Source: 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS) from IPUMS (2016-2021)

Note: This graph shows the percentage change in population of the IE by education from 2016 to 2021 using data from the 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS) from IPUMS, where 2016 is the base year.

looking for a job, providing us with an estimate of the percentage that are employed out of the population that is eligible to work. Those who are not employed might be people who are not part of the labor force or are involuntarily unemployed. The employment-to -population ratio for those with a BA degree has been significantly higher compared to those without a BA degree throughout this period. Pre-pandemic, the ratio hovered around 80% for the more educated population and around 60% for the less educated population.

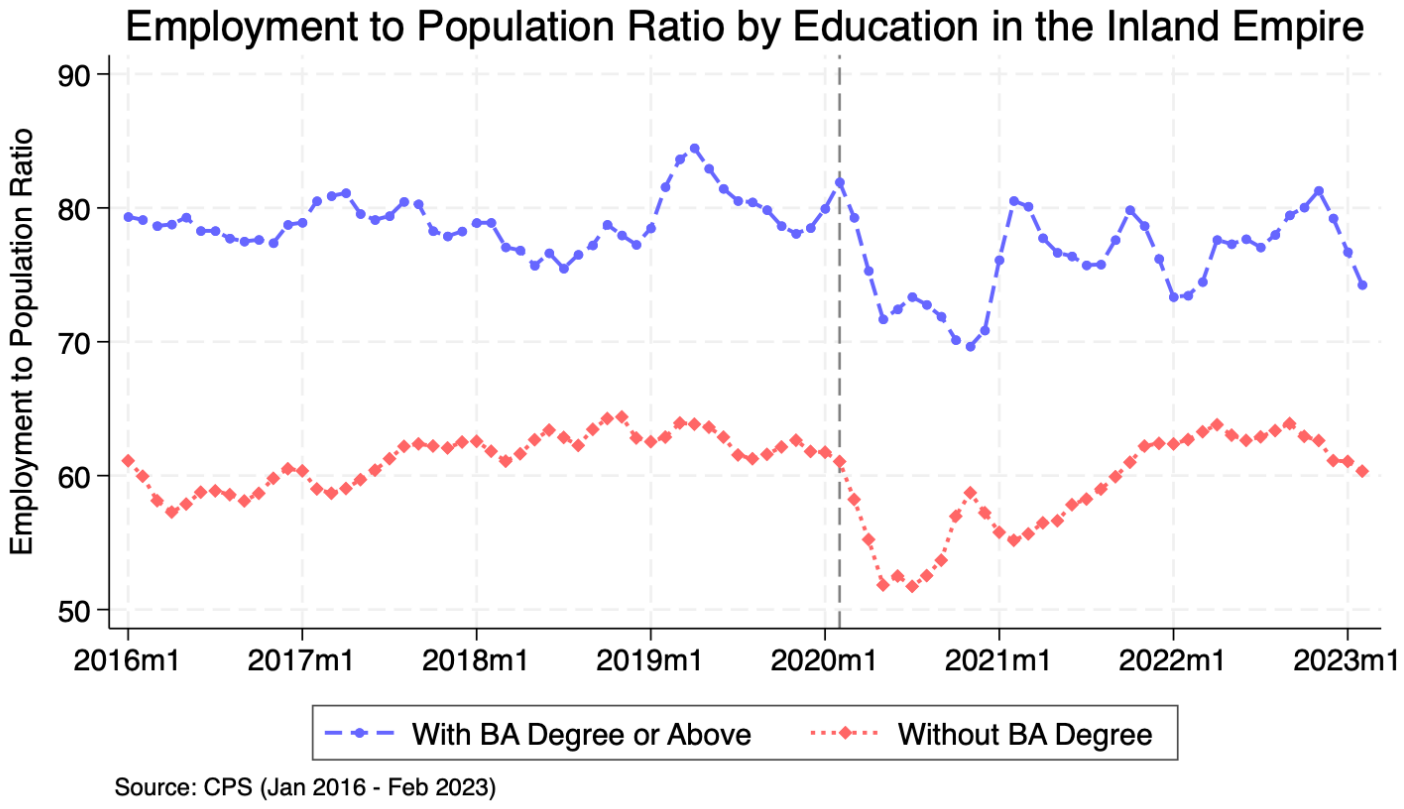
The recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic initially impacted both those with and those without a BA similarly. In terms of the effect of COVID recession, we can say that initially the impact of COVID was similar for the two groups of population. Those with a BA degree seemed to be able to recover quicker, however, than those without a BA, with the caveat that this statistic has become less stable since the pandemic.

We also see a gap by educational attainment when examining the unemployment rate. According to CPS data, the unemployment rate of workers with a BA degree who live in the IEhas mostly been lower than those who do not have a BA degree, implying it's easier for workers with a BA degree to find a job in this region.

It is also notable to observe the differential effects of the first and the second wave of COVID-19 on these two groups of workers. As Figure 16 shows, here was a sharp rise in unemployment during the 1st wave of COVID-19 (March 2020) for both groups of workers. Within a span of three months, beginning in March 2020, the unemployment rate increased by 11.25% for workers with a BA degree and 10.7% for workers without a BA degree. However, the recovery during the period between May 2020-February 2021 was quicker for the workers with higher educational attainment, ultimately widening the gap between unemployment rates for the two groups. With the second wave of COVID beginning in March 2021, unemployment started rising again which continued for the next three to four months, followed by a recovery period.

However, there is a period in 2022 when the unemployment rate reached around 4.5% for workers with more

FIGURE 15



Source: CPS (Jan 2016 - Feb 2023)

WORKER PROFILES

FLOR

County: Riverside **Age:** Mid-30s

Occupation: Farm Worker

Flor is a single mother of two who has had lifelong difficulties finding a stable income. Although Flor was born in California, and speaks English fluently, she only finished 9th grade. Due to her educational background, she has only managed to hold temporary jobs, which resulted in her experiencing homelessness ten years ago. She currently depends on CalFresh to feed her family.

On the recommendation of her mother, who works in the farm fields in Coachella Valley, Flor took a job picking grapes. While this was never something she thought she'd do, Flor was desperate to obtain a stable income to support her children and pay rent. Prior to beginning her new job, Flor's mother advised her to work fast and "push through" the difficult work. However, since she had never worked in the fields before it was difficult to learn how to pick grapes under pressure, and her coworkers complained about her pace. Additionally, Flor's work location constantly changed, making it impossible to increase her speed while learning a new environment and meeting a new supervisor's demands.

There were also other issues with the job. Flor, one of three women who worked in the predominantly male-dominated fields, often witnessed women being harassed by men. She recalls older men often talking to younger women in a flirtatious way and using inappropriate language. When confronted, the men would deny the accusations, and the women would be fired due to lack of evidence.

Working as a farm worker also comes with physical risks. Due to her short stature, Flor used a stool to cut grapes from tall trees, and sometimes fell from the stool because the ground was uneven. She often experienced shoulder pain and swollen feet from physical exertion. Additionally, the extremely high temperatures in the Coachella Valley can create dangerous conditions, with temperatures rising to over 120 degrees. Flor saw coworkers feeling symptoms of heat illness and experienced symptoms herself four times within the year she worked in the fields. When Flor asked if they wanted her to get help, her coworkers declined; they feared that if they obtained medical attention or complained about their heat illnesses, they would not be paid for their work. In addition, Flor often witnessed other workers displaying allergic reactions to chemicals, such as swollen eyes and burning sensations in their noses.

Because Flor was one of the few farmworkers who had documentation and spoke English, many assumed that she should have access to better employment opportunities. After being unable to withstand the negative comments she heard from her coworkers, the pressure to work fast, and the unsafe working conditions, Flor quit her job as a farm worker. Now, Flor works in a restaurant where she has a stable schedule and income and hopes that her children will have better opportunities than she had.

DEE

County: San Bernardino County **Age:** Early 50s

Occupation: In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS) Worker

Dee, a woman in her early 50s, is an IHSS caregiver in San Bernardino County. She currently has two part-time jobs and receives SSI for disability. Dee lives with her two teenagers and fiance, with a personal income of about $28,000 and a household income of approximately $90,000. Currently, she works 5 hours, 5 days a week as an IHSS provider, and also works 1 hour daily for an elderly client off the books. Previously employed as a restaurant hostess and a sales representative, she entered the caregiving profession 17 years ago when her mother, who had cancer, needed care. Dee appreciates her current role as a home care provider, and the recent improvements in the SEIU 2015 union contract, which has helped to increase the pay and benefits of IHSS workers in San Bernardino.

On an average workday, Dee starts at 4:15 AM. After some morning chores, she cares for her first client from 7:30-8:30 AM, then moves to her IHSS client at 9:00 AM. Dee's tasks include preparing meals, assisting her client, and doing household chores, wrapping up by 2:00 PM.

Dee acknowledges the financial challenges of her low pay, recalling a time when she couldn't afford her electric bill and needed assistance. She mentioned that she wants to take some of the courses offered for free through her union that can help to raise her pay, such as courses related to becoming a certified nursing assistant (CNA).

One major setback Dee faced was a non-payment from IHSS for the care she provided to a client for three months. Despite bureaucratic errors leading to coverage cancellation for her elderly client, Dee continued to provide care, even working for free. Initially, Dee believed her client was the one defaulting on payment, but later realized that it was the IHSS office's mistake. After assisting her client with additional measures for IHSS approval, which were futile, Dee stopped her services since she wasn't being compensated and needed to earn money. Sadly, this client later passed away, and both Dee and her fellow caregiver friend were never compensated for the many hours that they cared for this client.

GRACE

County: Riverside **Age:** Late 40s

Occupation: K-12 teaching assistant (for children with special needs and a home health care provider

Grace, in her late 40s, lives in Moreno Valley in a 13-person multi-generational household with her 3 children (one is a preteen and the other two are adults), and her long-term partner. Angela received a certificate as a California Nursing Assistant (CNA) and later received BA and MA degrees. She has previously worked as a CNA, a CNA supervisor, and a human resources coordinator.

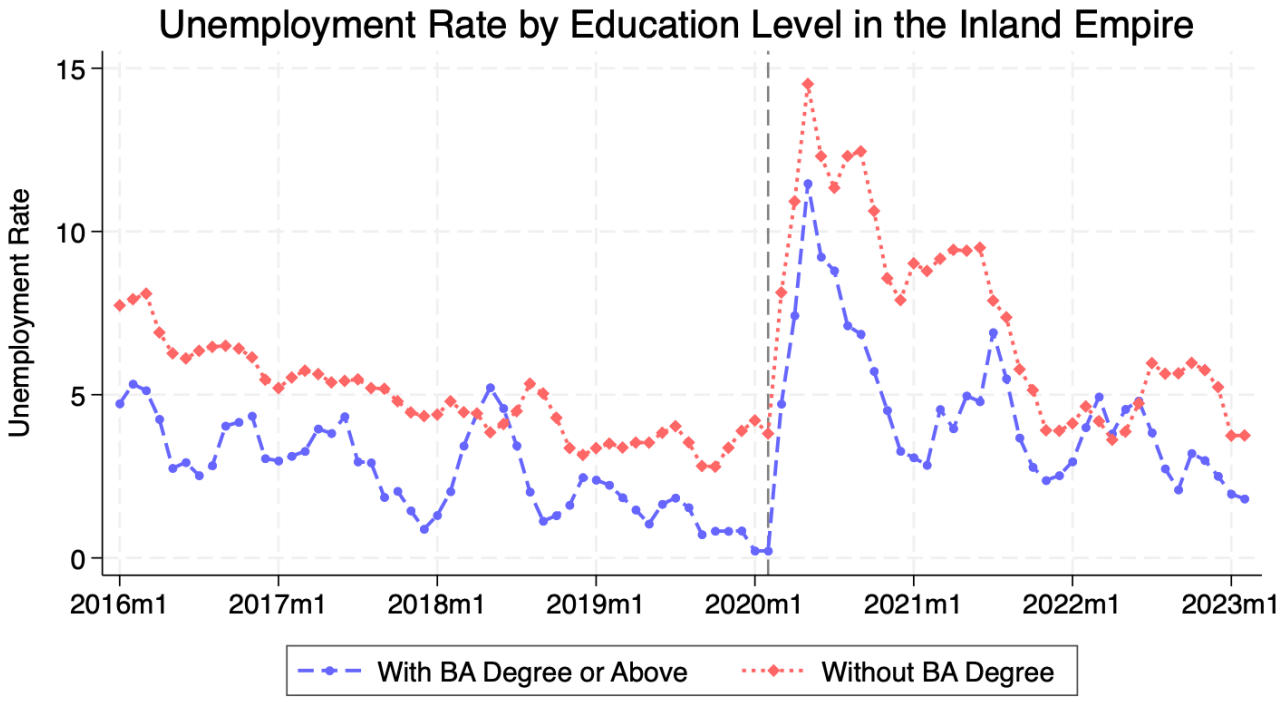
She is the primary caregiver for her adult son who is diagnosed with severe autism. Her family experience motivated her to work with children with emotional disturbances and other special needs. She is currently working as a teaching assistant for a school in a small city close to Riverside. She works with children with severe disabilities. She also logs in 15 to 30 hours a month as a home health care assistant at various nursing homes. Expressing her passion for her work, she shared, "I actually love, love, love those kids, watching them come in and not be able to do something and then they stay with us for the duration and they're able to do it... They're the underdogs but they show you that hey, I'm really not. I got this."

Grace said that she hates how people "discount" special needs classroom assistants even though they are doing the same work as certified teachers. She says the majority of the aides she works with and knows personally entered the field because they have disabled children of their own. She has been part of a union for the past three years and appreciates what it does for her in fighting for wage increases and benefits. However, she feels as if they definitely aren't paid well for their work, which is often stressful, and sometimes injurious. When asked what she would do if she could change anything about her work, she shared:

"Well, first I would make sure that they close the difference in pay between the nurses that do less than we do in the classroom. It is a good 15 bucks, the difference in pay! They are making upwards of close to 50 bucks to sit with one kid, whereas we are dealing with 12 to 15 kids on a daily basis."

Grace shared that her work schedule allows her to earn and provide care for her family although it's still a struggle to find supportive care for her son who suffers from seizures and uses a feeding tube. Currently, her older daughter cares for him when she is working, but she worries about how she will fill the gap once her daughter moves into her own place.

FIGURE 16



Source: CPS (Jan 2016 - Feb 2023)

education, and it was the first time since 2018 that the unemployment rate was higher for this group compared to the group with less education.

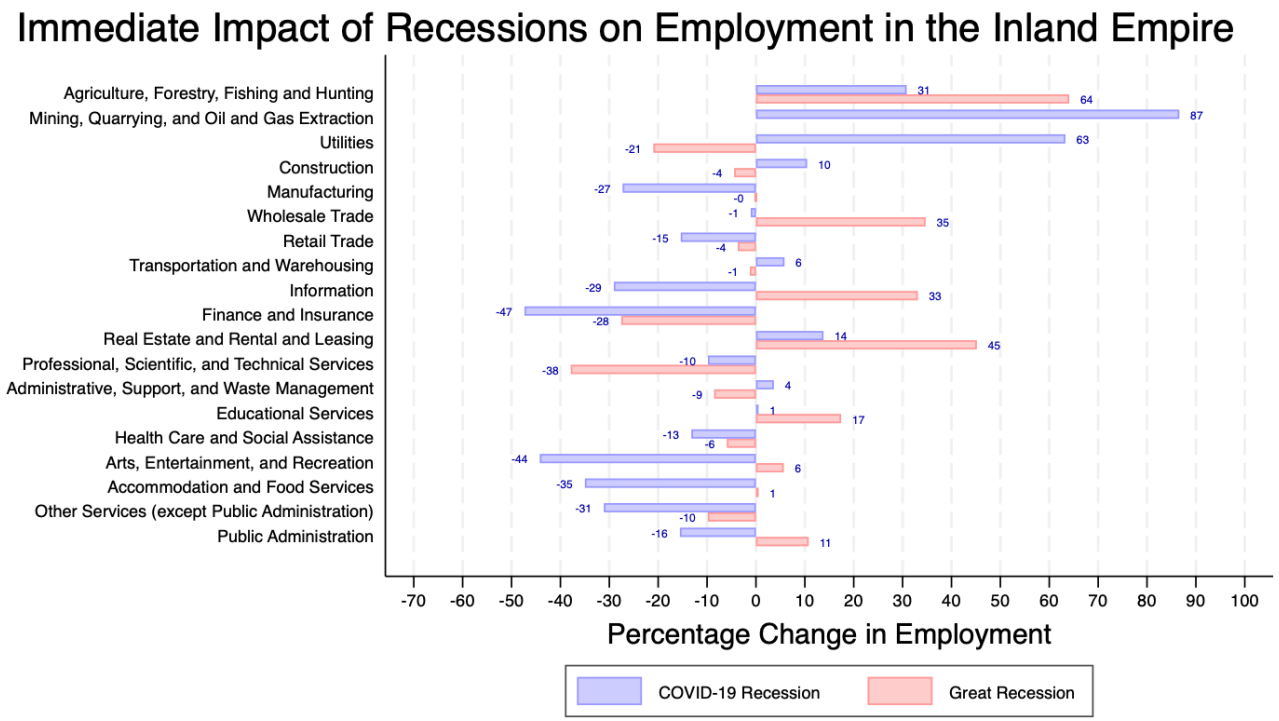
By 2023, unemployment rates are nearing their pre-pandemic level for workers without a BA degree. For workers with a BA degree, they are still at 1.8%, higher than the remarkably low pre-pandemic level of 0.2% (see Figure 15).

Sectoral Change in Employment

As shown in figures 15 and 16, the COVID-19 pandemic affected employment almost immediately. In addition to impacting the share of people who were able to work it also altered the composition of the market both in the short term and throughout the recovery. Figures 17 A and B show the immediate and short-run impacts, respectively, of the COVID-19 Recession and the Great Recession. It shows that the number of workers employed was still low in most sectors compared to pre-pandemic levels. The biggest hits initially were taken by workers employed in finance and insurance; arts and entertainment; accommodation and food services. The number of jobs in these sectors fell by more than 35%, considerably higher than during the Great Recession. Apart from these sectors, employment in manufacturing, information and other service sectors also observed a decrease of almost 30%. However, there are also sectors in which employment increased during the period March2020-August2020 compared to September2019-Feb2020. These include agriculture, mining, utilities, construction, real estate and administrative services, and transportation and warehousing.[6]

As we move a little further away from the onset of the recession, we see that some of those short-term gains were due to seasonality. For example, in the next period, September2019-Feb2020, we see significant declines in agriculture. In contrast, mining, utilities, and transportation and warehousing each saw significant job growth. During this period, workers employed in healthcare also increased as would be expected given the rising demand for health care to address the pandemic and an aging and growing population. This increase was only by a small percentage, however, and it is likely that demand for health care services is greater than its regional supply. For example, some hospitals in Southern California have a nurse vacancy rate of 30%, stressing overworked staff and causing some to leave the industry earlier than they planned. Additionally, spokespersons from both Cal Baptist University and Riverside City College have emphasized that limited slots in nursing and health care programs, rather than a lack of enthusiasm for the sector, is the region's primary obstacle (Hwang 2023).

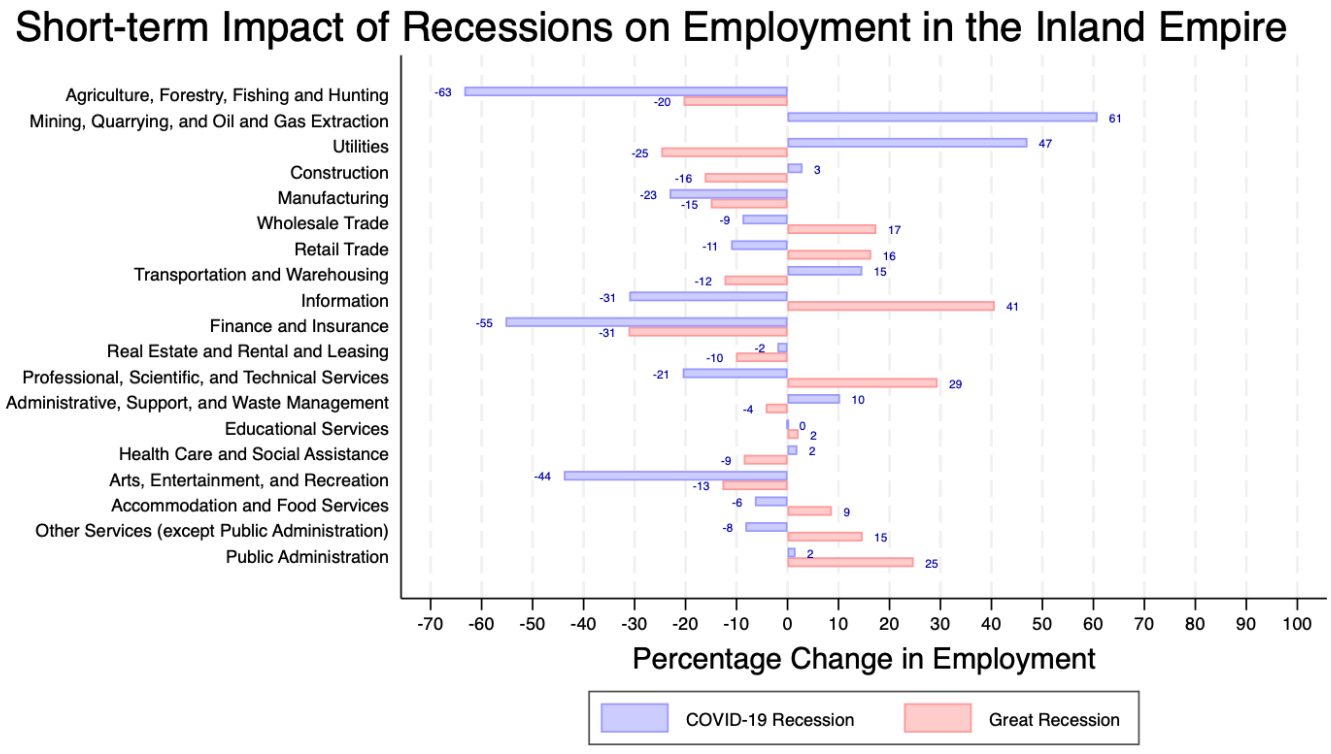
FIGURE 17 A



Source: CPS (2006 - 2023)

Note: Immediate impact is defined as the change from 6 months before the recession started and 6 months after the beginning of the recession.

FIGURE 17 B



Source: CPS (2006 - 2023)

Note: Short-term impact is defined as the change from 6 months before the recession started and the 6-month period after 6 months passed from recession.

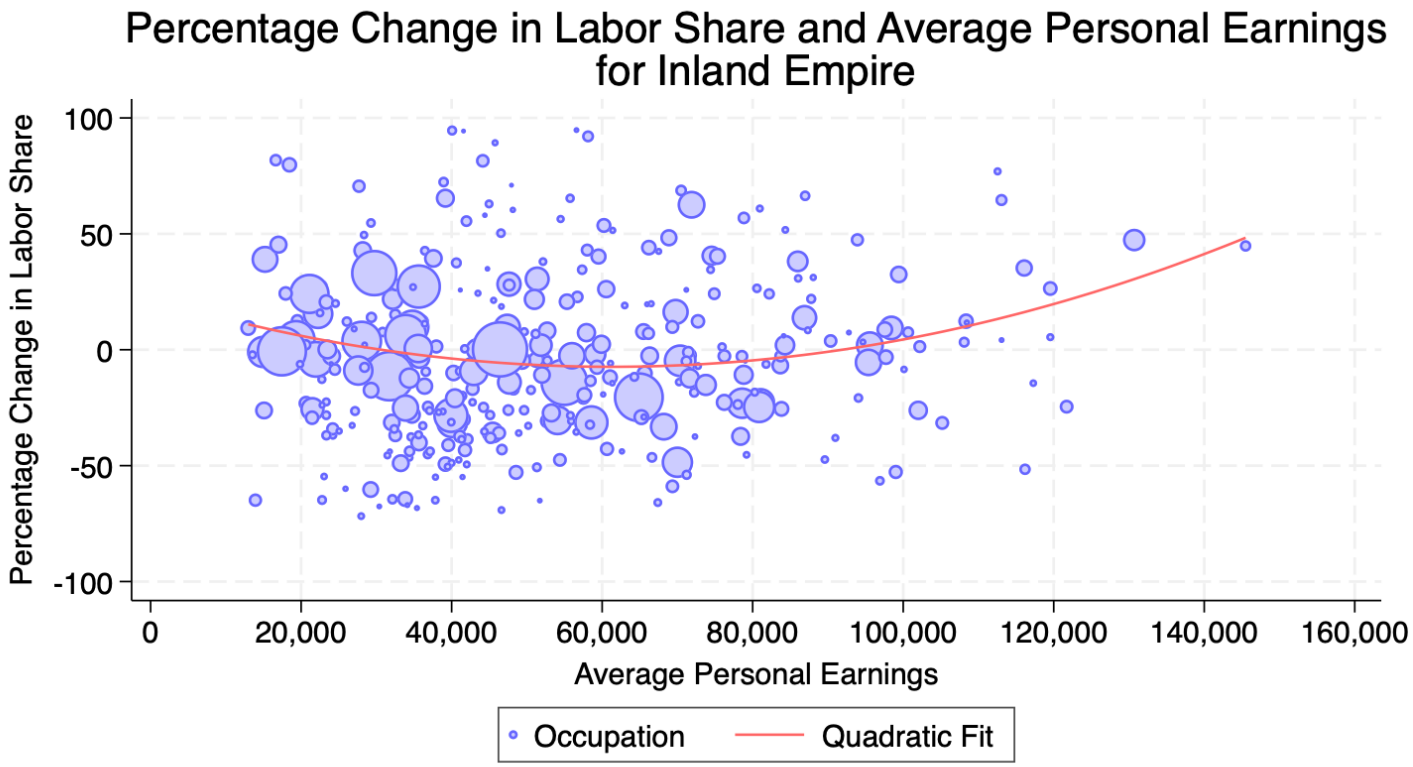
Data from QWI (Quarterly Workforce Indicators provided by the Census) shows how the industrial composition of the IE labor market has shifted between 2017 through 2022, as we have largely emerged from the COVID 19 pandemic. Perhaps the most remarkable change is a significant increase in the transportation sector where the number of jobs has jumped from 112,058 in 2016 to 205,863 in 2022, marking an increase of 83.7% over the five-year period. This industry is relatively low-paying compared to other industries. Apart from transportation, construction, real estate, professional services, administration and support services and healthcare sectors have also experienced employment growth of more than 10%. These are a mix of low, medium, and high paying industries, making it difficult to ascertain the overall impact on the market (see Table 4).

It is also important to note the regional differences that exist between the two counties of the IE. For instance, the overall drop in agriculture in the IE is driven by a fall in employment in agriculture in Riverside County. Infact, in San Bernardino employment in agriculture has increased over time (see Table 4).

Occupational Polarization

Earnings within industries are highly variable and differ significantly by occupation. Along with changes in industry composition, we have also seen significant changes in the composition of occupations in the IE labor market. Because occupations are predictive of earnings, changes in the share of the labor market that each occupation possesses may have large implications on inequality in the market. Figure 18 depicts the percentage change in labor share and average real personal annual earnings by occupation for the IE over the period of 2005 to 2021. It shows a stark pattern. Overall, the occupations at the low and high ends of the earnings distribution are growing faster than the rest of the labor market and are gaining labor share. In

FIGURE 18



Source: ACS 2009 and 2021 5-Year File from IPUMS.

Notes: The data are ACS 2009 (2005-2009) and 2021 (2017-2021) 5-Year File from IPUMS. This scatter plot illustrates the change in labor share on the y-axis and average earnings of the occupation on the x-axis with a quadratic line fit through the points. The occupations are grouped into three digits by the first three digits of the four-digit occupation codes. Labor share is defined by the sample-weighted sum of workers in the occupation in the IE over the sample-weighted number of workers total in the IE. The change is calculated using the 2021 and 2020 5-year ACS labor share. Average earnings are the average within each occupation over both 5-year samples. The variable used here for the median personal real wage income is the "incwage," which reports each respondent's total pre-tax wage and salary income - that is, money received as an employee - for the previous year. (https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/INCWAGE#description_section). The data for calculating the median personal real wage income are limited to those who are employed and the age range is from 16 to 64.

contrast, the occupations in the middle of the earnings distribution are losing ground. This polarization of the labor market has been observed in the US and the developed world generally, and the IE is not immune to this trend (e.g., see Goos, Manning, and Salomons 2009; Jaimovich and Siu 2020).

PART 3: EARNINGS, INEQUALITY, INFLATION AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

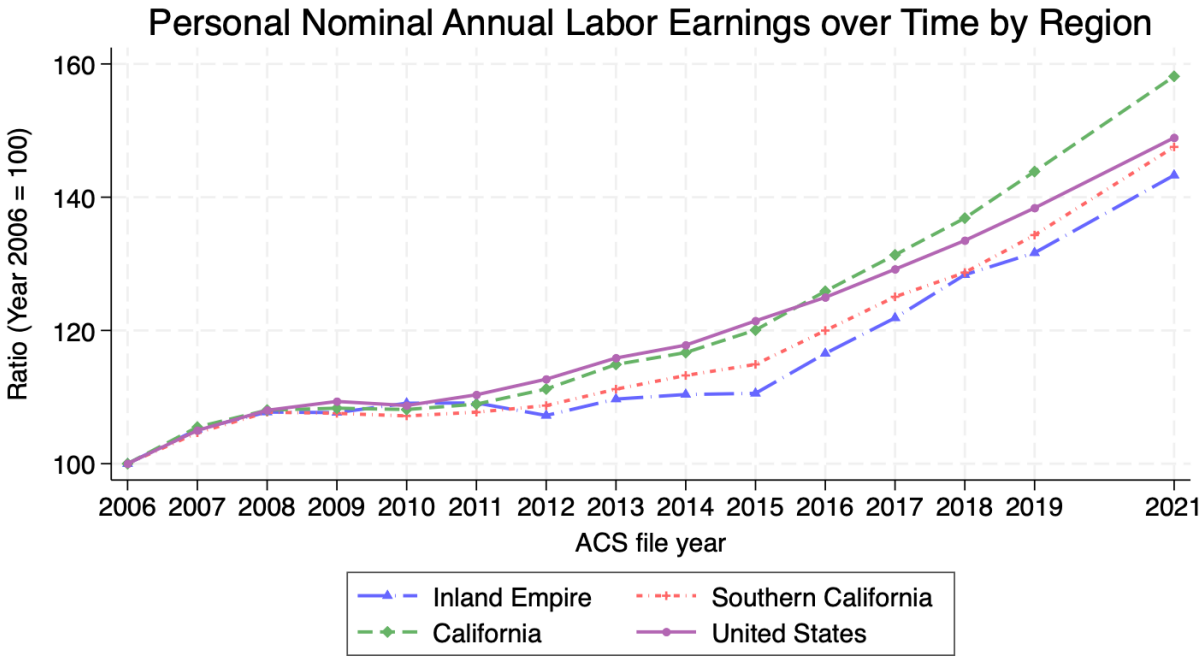
In the comprehensive landscape of the IE's labor market, wages and wage inequality hold a pivotal role in shaping the economic well-being of its workforce. Part 3 -- "Earnings, Inequality, Inflation and Economic Well-Being" – explores earning patterns, disparities, and the broader implications these have on workers' lives. Beyond mere numbers, wages significantly influence other facets of life, most notably housing affordability and the ever-pressing issue of poverty. By offering insights into the interplay between wages, housing, and poverty rates, we aim to present a holistic view of the economic challenges faced by the region's workers. It is essential to understand these interconnected dynamics to truly grasp the broader picture of worker well-being in the IE..

Earnings and Inequality

Wages have grown substantially in the IE, yet not at the same rate as other regions. Figure 19 shows that average wages have increased by 40% since 2006 in the IE, though this is lower than the increases in other Southern California counties,[7] the state, and the U.S.. Of course, costs have also risen over this same period and it is natural to ask how wages have changed relative to the changes in prices of basic household expenses, especially rent.

Going deeper into the wage inequality within the IE, Figure 20 shows trends in earnings inequality in average real wages using 2006 as a base year. We use three broad-based measures of inequality: the 90/10, the 90/50, and 50/10. The 90/10 shows how many times more someone in the top 90th percentage of the earnings distribution makes than someone in the bottom tenth percentage. Accordingly, the 90/50 describes inequalities between those at the top of the earnings distribution and those in the middle,[8] while the 50/10 shows inequalities at the bottom of the distribution between middle earners and those at only the 10th percentile.[9] Figure 20 shows that despite some fluctuations, overall inequality as measured by the 90/10 is comparable to the level it was at in 2006. This is because growth in inequality at the top end of the distribution has been offset by falling inequality between median earners and those at the 10th percentile. It is important to note, however, that since the start of the pandemic overall inequality has been rising, and this has been driven by more inequality at the bottom tail of the distribution (50/10).

FIGURE 19



Source: ACS 2006-2021.

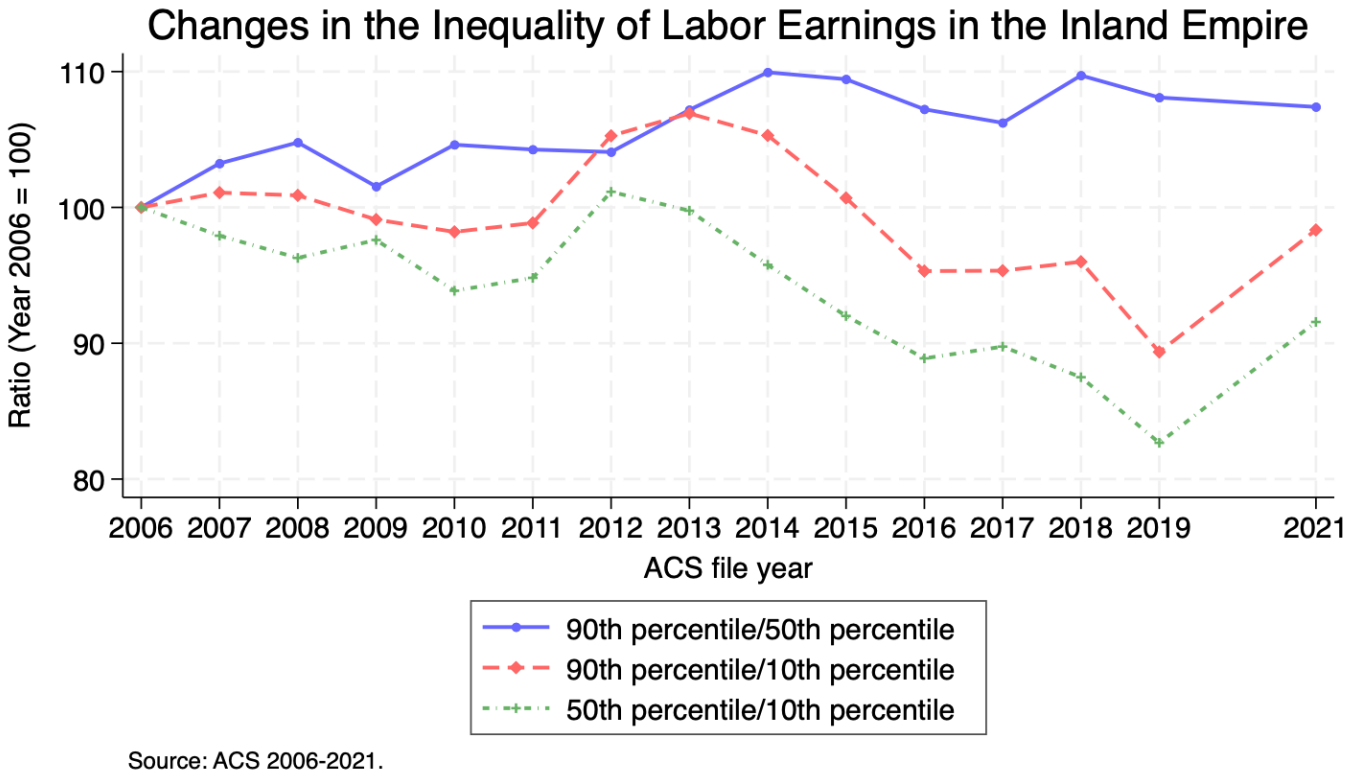
Notes: This graph shows personal nominal annual labor earnings over time in the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States using data sourced from the ACS (2006-2021). ACS data for 2020 was dropped due to known issues with data collection and data quality (https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sampdesc.shtml#us2020a). The age range is from 16 to 64 years old.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & EARNINGS

To further understand how earnings in the region compare to the cost of living, we examine the cost of housing, especially rent. Examining the same 15 year period from our earnings analysis, we see that rent prices have risen considerably in the country, state, region, as well as the IE where rental prices have outpaced the national average (see Figure 21). Since 2006, housing prices have risen 65% in the IE with much of that price growth happening in the last 5 years. Have the gains in nominal wages kept pace with these increases in rental prices? Largely no.

Figure 22 shows median household earnings over median rent for a two bedroom unit within the IE, California, Southern California, and the United States from 2016 to 2021.[10] The y-axis denotes the rent ratio to household income using 2016 as the baseline year. The implication is that the pace of earnings growth is slower than the pace at which housing costs are increasing in all regions since 2016. This gap between the rising cost of rent and earnings growth was higher in the IE compared with California and Southern California.

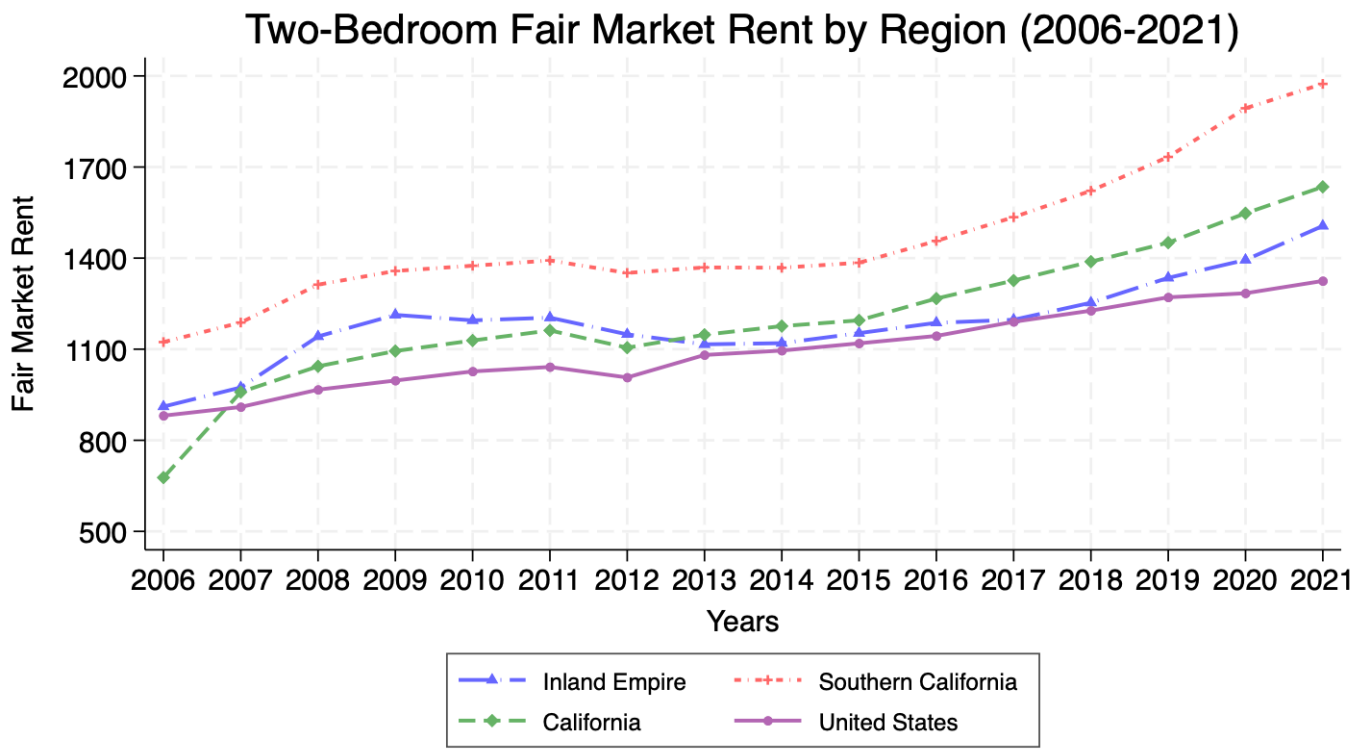
FIGURE 20



Source: ACS 2006-2021.

Notes: This graph shows earnings inequality in average real wages over time in the IE using data sourced from the ACS (2006-2021). The 90/10 reflects how many times more someone earning more than 90% of the earners in the IE makes over someone earning more than just 10% of earners. ACS data from 2020 is dropped due to known data collection and data quality issues (https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sampdesc.shtml#us2020a). The age range is from 16 to 64 years old.

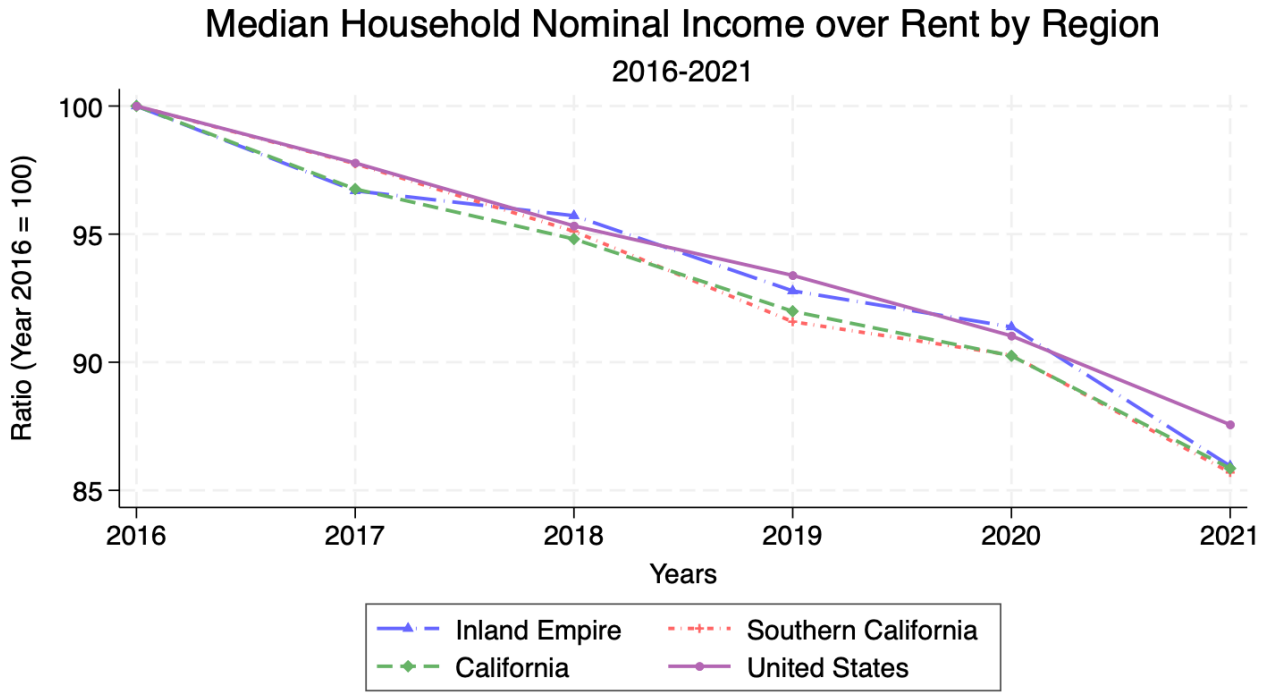
FIGURE 21



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R)

Notes: This line graph shows the fair market rent for two-bedroom by region from 2016 to 2021. Data is from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) and rent estimates are at the 50th percentile (or median).

FIGURE 22

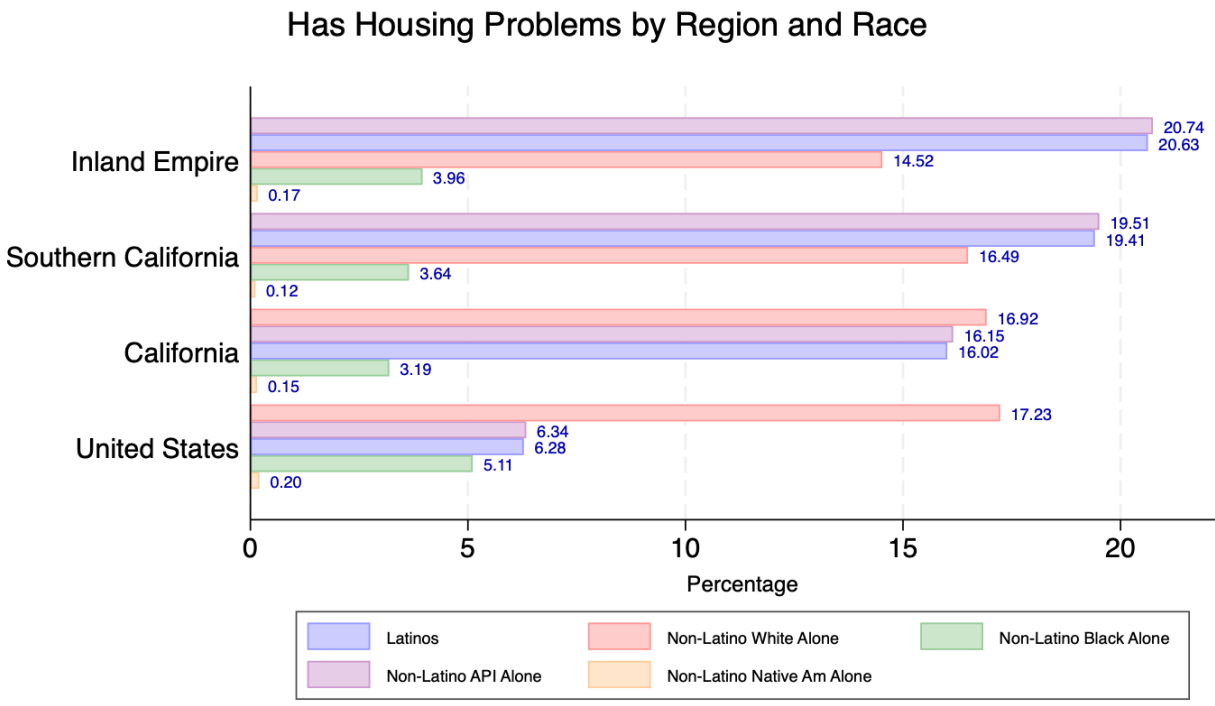


Source: 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS) from IPUMS (2016-2021)

Housing Problems

While housing affordability is a major issue, the actual quality of the unit itself can also be concerning. Figure 23 shows the percentage of housing units that have 1 or more of the 4 housing unit problems (lacks kitchen or plumbing, more than 1 person per room, or cost burden greater than 30%) by region and race. Data is from HUD's 2016-2020 CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) Data, which is based on 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates. Non-Latino API alone and Latinos have the highest percentages with housing problems in the IE.

FIGURE 23



Source: HUD's 2016-2020 CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) Data

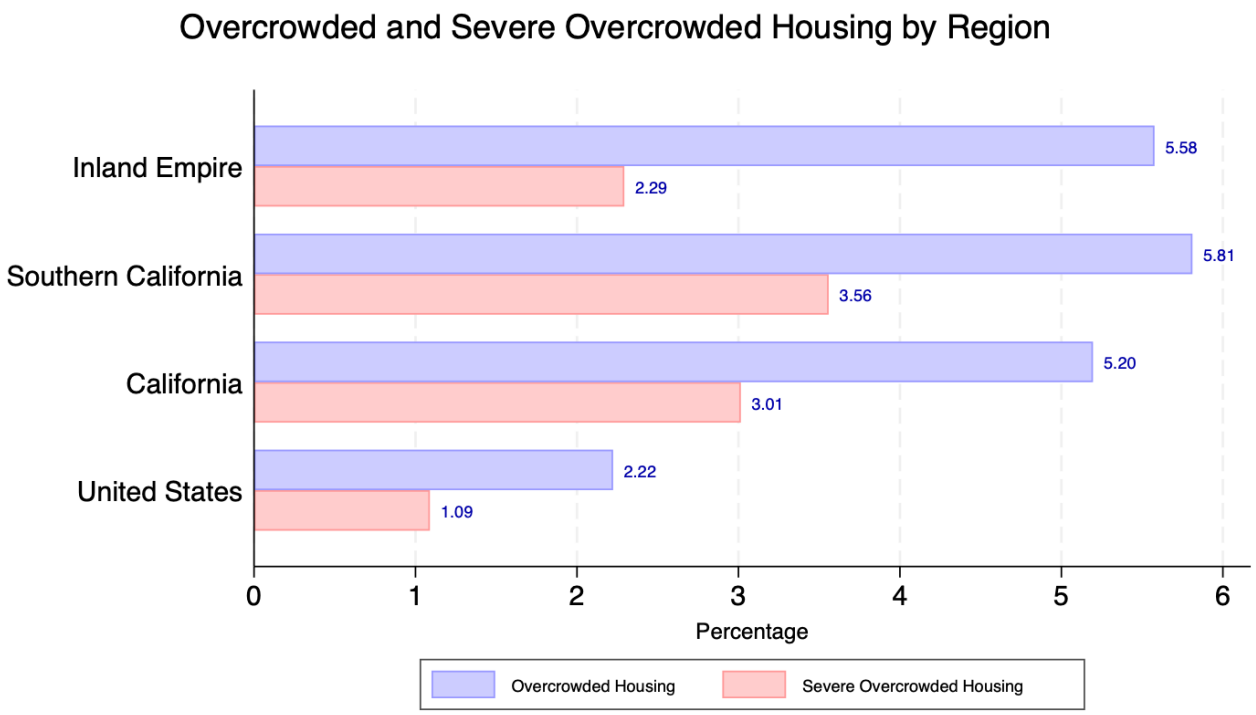
When housing costs are high, many often resort to sharing rooms to make things more affordable. Figure 24 shows the percentage of households experiencing overcrowded and severe overcrowded housing by region. Data is from the HUD's 2016-2020 CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) Data, which is based on 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates. Overcrowded households are defined as > 1.0 persons per room, whereas a Severe Overcrowded Household is> 1.5 persons per room. As Figure 25 indicates, the percentage of households that experience overcrowded and severely overcrowded housing is significantly higher in California, Southern California, and the IE than the United States as a whole.

Poverty Rate

Figure 25 shows the poverty rate in percentage for the United States, California, Riverside County, and San Bernardino County from 2000 to 2021. With the exception of 2007, San Bernardino County has consistently had the highest poverty rate compared with the nation, state, and Riverside County. The poverty rate was relatively steady between 2000 to 2007, peaks in 2012, though gradually declines in subsequent years. On the other hand, compared to the 2007 pre-recession levels, poverty rates in 2021 remain higher in San Bernardino County and are just above those levels in other regions .

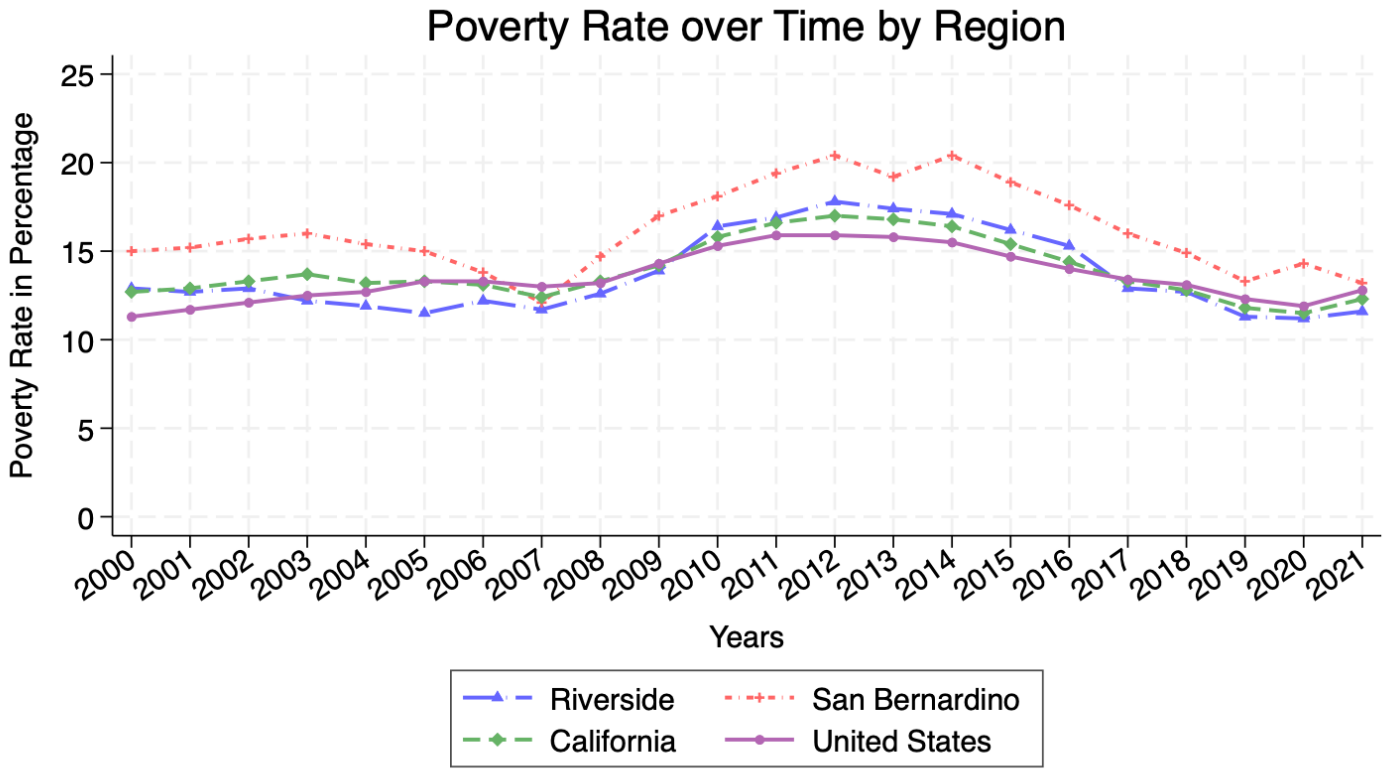
Within the IE, as elsewhere in the nation, poverty rates remain unequal by gender and race. Poverty rates are higher among women (14.4%) than men (11.9%). Among racial groups, poverty rates are the greatest among Blacks (18.4%), Native Americans (16.2%), other racial groups (15.6%), and Latinos (14.7%) compared to whites (10.8%) and Asians (10.5%).

FIGURE 24



Source: HUD's 2016-2020 CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) Data

FIGURE 25



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

WORKER INTERVIEWS & COMMON THEMES

Our five-person interview team collected a total of 19 interviews (in English and Spanish) with workers currently employed in the IE or who had been employed in the IE in the past year. Our sample included workers employed in industries that employ the most workers in the IE, such as health care, education, transportation, social assistance, and food services. We also included various workers in other types of jobs in which low wages and economic precarity are common as a few self-employed workers. Altogether, we collected workers from 5 educational workers, 3 food service workers, 3 health care workers, 2 self-employed workers, 1 child care worker, 2 farm workers, 2 social service providers, and 1 gig delivery driver. Workers interviewed included 12 women and 7 men who ranged in age (from a teenager to a worker in their fifties). Nine of these workers were Latino only, 5 were bi-racial (4 of which were bi-racial Latinos), 3 were Black, 1 was Chinese-American, and 1 was White. These worker profiles, ten of which we feature in this report, provide compelling narratives about what workers liked and did not like about their current and previous jobs, providing a nuanced understanding of job quality.

Educational workers interviewed, which included a substitute teacher, a counselor, a tutoring assistant, and several classroom aides for students with special needs, expressed a desire for higher wages and increased training to better support students with special needs. Childcare workers similarly described problems with low wages, societal devaluation of their work, and called for greater governmental support for children with special needs.

In the healthcare industry, interviewees raised concerns about being understaffed which can lead to negative outcomes for both patients and workers. IHSS workers discussed problems related to their low pay. Workers also found it difficult to correctly log their work hours and get paid for all of their work hours through their new electronic timesheet system, which they found difficult to use. If too many timesheet errors accrue, workers face sanctions such as long-term suspensions from their job. Social service workers similarly noted problems with low pay as well as with gender and racial discrimination on the job.

Food service workers interviewed, which included several Starbucks baristas and a restaurant server, described problems of low pay, unpredictable work schedules, and over-work. These problems contribute to high employee turnover, which in turn results in staff shortages and unreasonable workloads. Additionally, workers, many of whom are young women, expressed concerns about personal safety, sexual harassment by customers, and verbal harassment and favoritism by managers. Several Starbucks baristas interviewed described various changes in management practices that they attributed to employer retaliation against workers involved in organizing a union at their workplace. These workers' complaints are not isolated. By September 2023, Starbucks Workers United had won more than 340 union elections across the United States, but its members faced corporate resistance to contract negotiations and retaliation for organizing. A total of 633 open and settled Unfair Labor Practice charges had been filed at National Labor Relations Board offices around the nation, and more than 200 pro-union workers reportedly had been fired by the company (Sainato 2023).

Farm workers, many of whom are undocumented Latino immigrants, participate in precarious, low-wage seasonal jobs that are physically demanding and often very fast paced. Unfortunately, much of this work is carried out in high temperatures, sometimes above 100 degrees. Several farm workers interviewed described problems with dehydration, heatstroke, and other heat illnesses that they experienced and observed while working in the fields. Women farmworkers also described problems with gender discrimination in pay and sexual harassment.

Several undocumented Latino immigrants interviewed, in response to limited job opportunities given their immigrant status, became self-employed in small businesses. Self-employment improved some aspects of their working conditions, but their incomes were often low, unpredictable, and they lacked access to healthcare and retirement plans. The self-employed landscaper in our sample, similar to the farmworkers interviewed, described how working in temperatures above 100 degrees led to heat illness.

Delivery drivers have become an important part of the gig-economy. Prior to AB 5 app-based delivery drivers were often classified as independent contractors and denied many of the labor rights that other workers receive. Even after the passage of AB5 (later amended by AB 2257), there are many drivers who are still denied these rights. The food delivery driver interviewed expressed concerns about their low pay and unstable income.

Altogether, the workers interviewed for this study suggest that, along with access to good earnings and employment benefits, workplace health and safety, equity, respect, predictable work schedules, sufficient staffing, access to job training, employee classification, and the right to organize and form a union without employer retaliation are all important aspects of job quality. This report features 9 of the worker profiles we collected; others are available on our project website.

PROMISING INITIATIVES

UNIONIZATION, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND WORKER ORGANIZING

Researchers find that unionization positively impacts workers' wages and access to employment-related benefits, including health insurance, retirement pensions, and paid vacation days. Unionization also tends to reduce income inequality both within firms and the broader labor market (Fieveson 2022; Kochran et al. 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023). Overall, the percent of employed workers belonging to a union in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metropolitan statistical area was 17.8% in 2022, down from 20.7% five years ago, 22.3% twenty years ago, and 22.4% thirty years years ago(Hirsch, MacPherson, and Even 2023).

Regional declines in union density are not due to an absence of new worker organizing in the past five years. There have been various successful recent unionization drives in the IE, including those by Starbucks Workers United along with new member organizing, that have helped to bring new union members and energy into the regional labor movement. The overall decline in union density among IE workers over the past five years is likely the result of the many known challenges facing workers in the region and nation. Like their counterparts in other regions, IE unions have confronted the rapid growth of various employers in the region, such as Amazon and Starbucks, that have actively opposed unions (Emmons Allison and Reese 2023a; Sainato 2023). Like elsewhere in the nation, IE workers also face other serious challenges, including weak U.S. labor laws, rising rates of Unfair Labor Practices (ULPs) by employers, economic globalization, corporate restructuring, and deindustrialization (ILR School 2022; Luce 2014; Kochran et al. 2022; Sainato 2023). Conditions such as these have negatively affected union density across both the public and private sectors over time, but remain particularly pronounced within the private sector, especially manufacturing. In 2022, the percentage of workers belonging to a union was 53.5 in the public sector, 10.8 in the private sector, and 8.4 in private sector manufacturing, down from 63.0 in the public sector and 12.1 in the private sector in the past five years. Union membership rates have increased in private sector manufacturing over the past five years, from 6.9 % in 2017 to 8.4 % in 2022, but still remain significantly lower than thirty years ago. In 1993, the percentage of workers belonging to a union was 58.5 in the public sector, 14.5 in the private sector, and 14.8 in private sector manufacturing (Hirsch et al. 2023).

Even so, the overall rate of union membership in the Riverside-San Bernardino metropolitan area, 17.8% of employed workers in 2022 (Hirsch et al. 2023), remains relatively higher than the union membership rate in the United States (10.1%) and California (16.1%) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023). Perhaps most importantly, IE workers have organized through unions and other organizations over the past five years, and won impressive victories through their actions, contract negotiations, and political activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, labor organizations in the region, like elsewhere in the nation, confronted unprecedented threats to their lives and livelihoods, organized, and won various pay increases as well as improvements in workplace health and safety (Emmons Allison and Reese 2023b). Since 2021, as many previously unemployed or remote workers returned to work in person, workers have continued to mobilize and make gains at their workplaces through collective action, as the examples in the following paragraphs help to demonstrate.

Academic Workers & UAW

In 2022, academic workers at UCR, affiliated with four bargaining units of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) that together represented about 48,000 workers across the UC system, helped to make labor history when they and their UC colleagues participated in "the nation's largest strike in 2022, and the largest strike of academic workers in national history" (Esquivel 2022). It resulted in significant pay raises, improved benefits, and enhanced rights for academic workers, including both postdoctoral researchers and academic student employees (ASEs), including tutors, readers, teaching assistants, and graduate student researchers (GSRs). The newly negotiated UAW contracts for UC academic workers, many of whom are graduate students, included substantial increases in wages, ranging from 55-80% for ASEs and 25-80% for GSRs by 2024; they mark a major stride in recognizing the value of academic work. The contract also addresses crucial aspects of work-life balance, including a notable 27% increase in childcare subsidies and a first-ever remission of dependent healthcare for specific households. Enhanced paid

leave, job security measures, and protections against discrimination and bullying further contribute to a comprehensive and progressive agreement. Importantly, the contract prioritizes accessibility, health, and safety, with provisions ensuring academic employees' protection against unhealthy work environments and the right to refuse unsafe work. The introduction of guaranteed transit benefits, a 100% fee remission, and streamlined union processes collectively reflect a commitment to improving the overall well-being and rights of UC academic workers (UAW Staff 2022). Although not all of the strikers' demands were met, this landmark contract stands as a testament to the effectiveness of collective bargaining by unions and the ongoing efforts to advance the rights and conditions of academic workers through organizing.

Child Care Providers United

In 2019, California's home-based childcare providers, mostly women of color and many of whom are immigrant women of color that provide subsidized childcare for low-income families, celebrated a hard-won victory when Governor Newsom, signed AB 378 into law, which gave these workers the right to form a union and engage in collective bargaining. The passage of this law was the outcome of many years of concerted organizing and lobbying by childcare providers and their allies, including the families they serve. In 2020, home-based child care workers celebrated a union election victory that was at least 17 years in the making when 97% of them voted in favor of being represented by Child Care Providers United, a union that was jointly supported by UDW/AFSCME 3930 and SEIU Locals 99 and 521 (AFSCME Staff 2020).

In 2023, the members of Child Care Providers United celebrated again when they ratified a union agreement that secures an average, albeit temporary, pay increase of twenty percent. For workers and their allies, this was an important victory for an industry historically plagued by low wages (Gold 2023). The agreement, negotiated between the state and Child Care Providers United, covers more than 40,000 workers. In addition to the $600 million allocated for a rate increases over two years, the contract earmarks $100 million for healthcare. It also allocates $80 million for establishing the nation's first retirement fund for childcare providers, addressing a critical gap where less than a quarter of providers report having any retirement savings (Gold 2023; SEIU Local 99 2023). A key component of the agreement significantly improves the rate calculation system for providers who offer subsidized childcare. The previous voucher rates were pegged to a 2016 market survey, which experts claim did not align with the actual costs of providing high-quality care. Max Arias, the union's chief negotiator, sees the adoption of the new rate structure as a major victory, stating, "'That to me is the biggest win'" (cited in Gold 2023). This new rate structure could be implemented as early as 2025 and significantly improves childcare compensation. In doing so, this contract agreement will help to improve the quality of care by helping to attract and retain high quality child care providers, and to ensure more equitable access to quality childcare for families across California (D'Souza 2023; Gold 2023).

Home health Care Providers (IHSS workers) & SEIU Local 2015

In a significant victory for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) caregivers in San Bernardino County, SEIU Local 2015, the nation's largest long-term care union, most of whose members are women of color, concluded negotiations with the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors in 2023. The agreement, ratified by IHSS caregivers, marks a substantial milestone with enhanced wages and comprehensive benefits. The contract outlines a nearly 10% wage increase, including a $1 wage supplement that elevates hourly wages from $16 to $17 upon implementation, with an additional 60-cent increase scheduled for January 2024. Beyond the wage improvements, the contract allocates $10,000 in new funding for personal protective equipment (PPE), bringing the total PPE funding to $25,000, and $50,000 in new funding was allocated for essential training (SEIU 2015 Staff 2023).

Participating in the bargaining team, Isabel Bryan, an IHSS provider in San Bernardino County, emphasized the significance of the collective effort, stating, "Our collective voice and narratives propelled us to victory in San Bernardino County, resulting in a contract that grants better wages and benefits. This achievement reinforces the solidarity within our union, demonstrating our capacity to triumph when united" (cited in SEIU 2015 Staff 2023). According to Arnulfo De La Cruz, President of SEIU Local 2015, the new contract will help more IHSS members to be able to afford to live in the cities where they work. Enrique Camacho, Regional Vice President of SEIU Local 2015 and a bargaining team member, lauded the negotiations, stating, "This is the best contract negotiations we've had because I think we've ensured the Board of Supervisors as a whole understands the needs of home care providers, our recipients, and our families" (cited in SEIU 2015 Staff 2023). SEIU Local 2015, working in coalition with UDW/AFSCME 3930 and other local unions representing IHSS

workers in California, continue to advocate for the passage of state policies to provide living wages and other improvements for IHSS workers and their clients.

Delivery Drivers and Warehouse Workers

Labor organizations representing workers in the region's rapidly growing transportation and warehousing industries have also won some significant victories through worker organizing. For example, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters made impressive wage and other gains in its 2023 contract negotiations with UPS, following a year-long organizing campaign among its 340,000 members, and the threat of a national strike. As described by Barry Eidlin (2023), the new UPS contract, the largest private sector union contract in North America, "eliminates the two-tier driver classification that had sparked widespread member anger in the 2018 contract. It provides sizable wage increases, especially for the lowest-paid part-timers, which will do more to raise the wage floor at UPS than any previous contract. It also requires UPS to create more full-time jobs, provide protections against excessive heat, restrict management surveillance, and limit forced overtime, among other gains."

Warehouse workers are also organizing through independent organizations led by rank-and-file workers, such as IE Amazon Workers United (IE-AWU) at Amazon's KSBD air cargo facility in San Bernardino. Workers at that facility carried out several walkouts in 2022, and have continued to press their main demands for pay increases, safer working conditions, and no retaliation for organizing, with active support from their community and labor allies. In addition to winning various safety improvements, KSBD workers organized by IE-AWU received a wage increase of $1.75 per hour in September 2023, which was higher than the $1.25 per hour increase that was given to their counterparts at other local Amazon facilities. Yet, workers continue to push for higher wages since their base hourly pay ($19.75) still remains relatively low, especially in comparison to the wage standards of their unionized counterparts at UPS (Deniz 2023).

POLICY VICTORIES

Unions, worker centers, and other labor organizations and their allies in the IE and throughout California have also successfully improved workers' rights through various successful policy campaigns. For example, in 2016, California legislators increased the state minimum wage to $15 per hour, which was implemented through phases between 2017 and 2023. Although $15 per hour is insufficient to meet the rising costs of living over the past five years, research finds that increasing the state minimum wage generally raises the wage floor and puts upward pressure on workers' wages at the lower ends of the income distribution with little change in levels of employment (e.g., see Cengiz et al. 2019). The following highlight a few notable recent policy victories for workers that the California labor movement has celebrated:

California Assembly Bill 701 (AB 701)

California AB 701 creates new state regulations on warehouse employers' use of work quotas to ensure that they are not unreasonable and so high that they lead to unsafe working conditions, inability to use the restroom when needed, and pressure to continue working during required work breaks, and protects workers' right to complain about such issues and be informed about work rate requirements, and to do so free of employer retaliation. The passage of this new state law, the first legislation of its kind in the nation, was the outcome of a concerted policy campaign by the Warehouse Workers Resource Center and their allies in the state's labor movement (Reese 2022).

Fast Food Workers' Council & Wage Gain

For decades, fast-food workers, SEIU, and other allies in the region and state have organized and advocated for improved wages and better working conditions for workers in the fast food industry, which employs over 500,000 workers statewide. In 2022, fast food workers celebrated when Governor Gavin Newsom and state legislators, in response to their demands, adopted a path breaking new law that created a new Fast Food Council, which includes fast food workers, worker advocates, and industry representatives, and gave it the authority to set binding statewide standards for wages and working conditions in that industry. This law was later replaced through the passage of AB 1228 in 2023, authored by Assemblymember Chris R. Holden. Although AB 1228 eliminated the Fast Food Council's previous authority to establish binding labor and employment regulations for the industry, it empowers the Fast Food Council, at least until January 1, 2029, to recommend standards related to labor, health, and safety, to state agencies, and obligates those agencies to review and respond to those recommendations. Notably, AB 1228 also raised the wage floor for workers employed by national fast food restaurants. Starting April 1, 2024, the minimum wage for these fast-food employees will rise to $20 per hour, a significant boost from the 2022 average of $16.21. The law also includes provisions for annual increases capped at the lesser of 3.5% or the

annual increase in the US-Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. By doing so, this law is likely to put upward pressure on entry-level wages in other industries, and could help to pave the way for increases in the statewide minimum wage. (Office of the Governor Gavin Newsom Staff 2023; Lotito, Michael, Joy Rosenquist, and Bruce Sarchet 2023). The legislation broadly applies to fast food restaurants, although various types of establishments, such as those within airports, affiliated with hotels, event centers, theme parks, museums, or gambling establishments, are apparently excluded. Additionally, local jurisdictions retain the authority to establish more protective standards, but restricts them from adopting laws solely targeting fast-food employees. The passage of AB 1228 introduces a sectoral approach to wage regulation, with the Fast Food Council empowered to address a range of working conditions beyond monetary compensation. In doing so, it provides a pathbreaking model for similar initiatives in other states and industries, and positions California at the national forefront of policy innovations aimed at improving labor standards (Lotito, Rosenquist, and Sarchet 2023).

CALIFORNIA'S HIGHROAD TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS (HRTP)

High Road Training Partnerships (HRTPs) in California are worker-centered training collaborations between labor organizations and industry that aim to expand opportunities for workers while meeting the needs of employers in various sectors. The initiative aligns with California's commitment to creating high quality jobs, promoting equity, and addressing climate change.

HRTPs bring together employers, labor unions, community organizations, workforce boards, and educational institutions to develop and deliver training programs. These programs help workers, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to access and advance in quality jobs with good wages, benefits, and career paths.

These partnerships focus on sectors that are critical to California's economy, such as healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and construction. They emphasize training for green jobs and the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy.

HRTPs are supported by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and align with the state's broader workforce development strategies (California Workforce Development Board 2020; IE High Road Collaborative 2023). They represent a promising approach to building a more inclusive and resilient labor market in California, prioritizing workers' voice and well-being along with industry competitiveness.[11]

INLAND EMPIRE BLACK WORKER CENTER'S IEWORKS WATER PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The "Pre-Apprenticeship Program," led by the IE Black Worker Center (IEBWC), is a significant initiative under the HRTP aimed at addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the water and wastewater industries in the IE. The IEBWC coordinated this program in collaboration with IEWorks, Jewish Vocational Services, and local community organizations to connect Black workers with promising career opportunities in these industries (Omer, Thomas, and Wangari 2023).

Dr. Nosakhere Thomas, Executive Director of IEBWC, emphasized the holistic approach, stating,

"We are most pleased by feedback that participants felt like they were heard, valued, and treated humanely. Also, of special import is the value placed on the trauma-informed math instruction that was delivered using gamification. It's not just about preparing individuals for careers; it's about empowering them with a holistic approach, addressing their unique needs, and ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect."[12]

This 15-week program integrates a robust technical curriculum with comprehensive participant support. The curriculum readies participants for state exams, such as the Water Distribution 1 and 2 (D1, D2) State Exams, making them highly competitive for entry and mid-level water sector positions. It covers a spectrum of hard skills, including OSHA-10, Intro to Water Resource Management Industry, Intro to Water Careers, and Water Technology Math. Additionally, it imparts soft skills such as resume/interview preparation, mindset development, Gallup Strengths, and financial literacy. The program also educates participants on worker rights, labor history, and advocacy, preparing them as future workplace and community leaders (Omer et al. 2023).

Moreover, the program offers personalized "supportive services" to cater to each participant's unique needs. This support encompasses services like childcare, mileage reimbursement, a $600 stipend, laptops, wifi access, social-emotional support, and other customized aids like books, tuition, uniforms, work boot, and trade association memberships, all aimed at ensuring their success (Omer et al. 2023).

The program has yielded remarkable results: More than 95% of participants completed the program during the first three cohorts. Over a quarter secured full-time positions in the water sector, while 20% obtained internships in the field. The remaining participants secured similar full-time positions in various sectors. Participants attribute their success to the wraparound support, which proved instrumental in addressing critical needs such as childcare and commuting expenses. For instance, Jessica, a program participant, found that this support allowed her to balance her caregiving responsibilities with her pursuit of career advancement (Omer et al. 2023).

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program serves as a compelling illustration of a successful worker-centered approach, with potential for expansion and greater state support. The financial investment in the program has already produced both direct and indirect benefits for the local community. It has enabled participants to access valuable career opportunities while strengthening labor unions and labor rights partnerships. Additional commitments could further enhance hands-on training, create more apprenticeships, connect participants with more desirable positions, and expand public education in support of worker justice. The program stands as a promising model for both workforce development and community investment, exemplifying the collaborative efforts of organizations like the IE Black Workers Center, IEWorks, and Jewish Vocational Services, all dedicated to fostering equitable pathways in the IE (Omer et al. 2023).

POLICY OPTIONS

Navigating through a landscape marked by significant economic shifts and the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Inland Empire stands at a crossroads of opportunity and challenge. As we explore policy options, our approach is guided by an understanding of the workforce's experiences and the systemic barriers shaping the economic trajectories of diverse communities within the region.

This section is dedicated to outlining policy options that resonate with the aspirations and needs of workers, aiming to foster an environment where equitable opportunities flourish, and systemic disparities are diligently addressed. From enhancing educational pathways and skill training to robust worker protections and comprehensive support policies, the objective is to cultivate a resilient workforce that thrives in the face of evolving economic demands. Drawing on insights and key findings from our analysis, these policy recommendations are envisioned as catalysts for meaningful change, promoting a labor market in the IE that is marked by inclusivity, justice, and vibrant opportunities for all.

EDUCATION AND SKILL TRAINING

As the economy and population of the IE continues to grow, it becomes even more important to align education and skill training with the demands of the regional job market, which is rapidly changing amid an aging population and technological changes, including the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) at work. Implementing policies that support this alignment can contribute to a more equitable as well as robust and resilient workforce, meeting both current and future industry needs. The following are key policy options to consider:

Expanding Access to Higher Education

Advocate for policies at state and federal levels designed to make higher education more affordable and accessible. Expanding funding for educational scholarships and grants will help to reduce persistent race and class inequities in educational attainment, and thereby encourage greater equity in labor market outcomes.

High Road Educational Partnerships

Advocate for policies that facilitate collaboration between high schools, colleges, labor organizations, and local industries. Such partnerships can help to ensure that education involves worker voice and is matched with the skills and experiences required by local employers and that students are prepared and matched with high road jobs upon graduation. Policymakers could incentivize these collaborations through grants, tax breaks, or other mechanisms.

High Road Training Partnerships

Encourage the establishment and expansion of high road apprenticeship programs that provide hands-on experience and skill development in various trades and professions. These programs, like the one coordinated by the IE Black Worker Center, can offer a vital bridge between education and employment, particularly in sectors with a high demand for specialized skills. State or local support could include funding, coordination with trade unions, or regulatory adjustments to streamline the creation of new apprenticeships.

Vocational Training Programs

Support the development of vocational training programs within community college and trade tech schools that provide targeted training for specific occupations.

These programs can serve as valuable pathways for individuals who may not pursue traditional higher education but are looking to build careers in fields such as manufacturing, healthcare, or technology. Policymakers could bolster these efforts through funding, alignment with industry certifications, and connections with local employers.

Lifelong Learning and Reskilling Opportunities

Recognize the importance of continuous learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing job market. Policies that promote access to ongoing education and reskilling can help workers stay competitive and adapt to shifts in industry needs. This might include support for community college programs, online learning platforms, or collaboration with industry-led training initiatives like High Road Training Partnerships (HRTPs).

Equity and Accessibility

Ensure that education and training opportunities are accessible to all members of the community, regardless of socio-economic background or disabilities. Policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in educational pathways, including the provision of affordable child care, transportation assistance, and ADA enforcement, can help build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the IE and ensures that all residents can participate in the region's economic growth.

WORKER PROTECTIONS

In an increasingly complex labor market, the protection of workers' rights and welfare remains a paramount concern. The IE has a diverse workforce, including many in precarious employment situations such as gig workers, contract workers, and those in sectors like fast food. Implementing comprehensive worker protections can enhance job quality, promote equity, and ensure that economic growth benefits all members of the community. The following policy goals may contribute to these goals:

Expand and Improve Labor Law Enforcement

Increased national and state funding is necessary to ensure that regulatory agencies, including the U.S. Department of Labor and the California Workforce and Development Agency and their related regulatory boards and departments, have the resources and staffing necessary to monitor and enforce employers' compliance with existing labor laws, including those related to equal employment opportunities, health and safety, wages and hours, and the right to form unions, organize, and collectively bargain.

Occupational Safety and Health

Enhance regulations and enforcement of occupational health and safety, with particular attention to industries and employers known for hazardous working conditions, including those that expose indoor and outdoor workers to high heat. This may include expanded funding for Cal/OSHA, targeted inspections, education campaigns, increased protections against employer retaliation for workers who report unsafe conditions, and expedited implementation of California's new indoor heat regulations.

Protections Against Employer Retaliation

Strengthen and better enforce laws that protect workers' rights to organize, join unions, and engage in collective bargaining. These rights are foundational to worker empowerment and can lead to improvements in wages, benefits, and working conditions. Implement strong anti-retaliation protections for workers who report violations of labor laws, unsafe working conditions, or other workplace issues. Protecting whistleblowers is also essential to maintaining accountability and promoting a culture of compliance.

Protections for Temporary Agency, Gig, and Contract Workers

Enact and implement policies that recognize and address the unique challenges faced by temporary, gig, and contract workers. This may include enforcing joint employer responsibility, restrictions on employee misclassification, adopting a statewide Temporary Workers' Bill of Rights (similar to the one adopted by New Jersey), and other measures to extend protections such as minimum wage guarantees, overtime pay, sick leave, and other worker rights typically provided to employees.

Living Wage Policies

Adopt and enforce living wage policies at state and local levels, and through community benefit agreements and project labor agreements. Living wage policies ensure that workers can earn enough to meet basic living expenses. A living wage reflects a commitment to economic dignity and helps to reduce poverty and income inequality.

Sick Leave and Family Leave

Adopt and enforce comprehensive sick leave and family leave policies that recognize the importance of work-life balance and support workers in times of illness or family need. These policies can contribute to healthier, more resilient communities.

Fair or Predictive Scheduling

Adopt statewide fair or predictive scheduling policies, similar to those adopted at the local level by California cities such as Berkeley, Emeryville, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. These policies require employers to provide at least two weeks notice of work schedules or to pay extra for schedule changes within this time period, and to schedule shifts at least 10 hours apart to ensure that workers' have sufficient time to rest. Research suggests that such policies help to improve workers' morale, productivity, and reduce employee turnover (Paycom 2023).

Worker Protections from Illegal Employer Mandates

Increase and strengthen protections for workers, including independent contractors, who are directed by employers to take illegal actions to fulfill their work duties, such as parking in designated no-truck zones, which result in costly legal fines for workers.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

More than one out of five, or at least 21% of IE residents are immigrants, of which at least 10% are immigrants without citizenship. Expanding immigrants' rights, including expanding affordable and accessible pathways to citizenship, would help to further protect workers from exploitative and abusive working conditions. Expanding immigrant rights would help to enhance immigrants' capacities to organize, file legal complaints, and pursue expanded employment opportunities without fear of employer retaliation and deportation.

GREEN ECONOMY & SUSTAINABILITY

As global awareness of environmental challenges grows, there is a significant opportunity for the IE to position itself at the forefront of the green economy. Emphasizing sustainability aligns with broader societal goals to mitigate climate change and reduce the high levels of air pollution in the region; it also presents economic opportunities through the expansion of new industries, technologies, and high wage jobs. Here are some policy options to encourage the growth of the green economy in the region, which can be pursued through policies at all levels of government as well as through Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefit Agreements with developers and local and county government bodies that oversee economic development initiatives:

Green Job Training Programs

Develop and fund training programs that prepare workers for careers in the green economy. Partnering with educational institutions, labor unions, and industry experts can create pathways to skilled jobs in energy efficiency, renewable energy, environmental protection, and more.

Support for Clean Transportation

Encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, public transportation, and alternative modes of transport through incentives, infrastructure development, and public awareness campaigns targeted at both consumers and transportation-related industries. These initiatives can reduce air pollution while stimulating growth in the green economy.

Energy Efficiency Standards

Implement or strengthen building codes and standards that promote energy efficiency in residential, commercial, and industrial structures. Providing support for retrofitting existing buildings can create jobs and reduce energy consumption.

Transforming Waste Management

Fund and implement programs to encourage more composting and recycling among local residents and school children to minimize waste and landfill. Such programs educate the public, create jobs, and help to reduce our environmental impacts on the region.

Climate Resilience Planning

Work with local governments and community stakeholders to develop comprehensive climate resilience plans that address potential challenges related to extreme weather, sea-level rise, and other climate-related impacts. This includes infrastructure investments and land-use planning that considers long-term sustainability, including addressing working conditions and potential climate-related economic impacts.

Environmental Justice Considerations

Ensure that economic development policies related to the green economy consider the needs and interests of all community members, including those in historically underserved or marginalized communities. Community voice and equitable access to green jobs, clean energy, and other benefits is essential to the overall success of sustainability efforts.

COMPREHENSIVE WORKER SUPPORT POLICIES

The well-being and success of workers in the IE extend beyond their place of employment, encompassing a holistic view of life that includes access to affordable

housing, transportation,child care, mental and physical health, and other "wrap-around" services. By advocating for comprehensive policies, the region can create an environment where individuals can thrive both in their jobs and their communities. The following policy options may serve as effective strategies:

Housing

- Zoning Changes: Encourage higher-density housing, mixed-use developments, and conversion of commercial spaces to residential to increase affordable housing availability.
- Rent Controls: Stabilize housing costs for renters through balanced rent control measures.
- Housing Subsidies: Provide financial assistance or support for developers to make housing more affordable.
- Inclusionary Housing Policies or Community Benefit Agreements: Require the owners of new development projects to include affordable units through new regulations or legally binding Community Benefit Agreements.
- Community Land Trusts and Cooperative Housing: Support community-based models for long-term housing affordability.
- Homeownership Assistance: Assist first-time homebuyers, particularly those from underserved communities.

Health and Wellness

- Healthcare Access: Facilitate access to affordable healthcare, including preventative care and mental health services, through increased investments in publicly subsidized health care and employer-provided health care.
- Workplace Health, Safety, and Wellness Programs: Require employers to provide adequate health and safety training and measures to prevent workplace accidents and illnesses and offer wellness programs that focus on physical fitness, stress reduction, and overall well-being.

Additional Wrap-around Services

- Public Transit Expansion: Improve and expand public transit systems to reduce commute times and provide accessible transportation options.
- Childcare Support: Offer expanded subsidies for childcare to better support working parents.
- Educational and Skill Training: Align curriculums with job market demands and provide vocational training programs.
- Nutrition and Food Security: Implement programs to ensure workers have access to healthy food options.
- Legal and Financial Counseling: Provide support for legal and financial matters that may impact workers' stability and success.
- Community Engagement and Social Support: Foster community cohesion and support networks to build resilience and connection among workers.

The multifaceted needs of the IE's workforce require an integrated and compassionate approach. By considering housing, transportation, health, and other support services, policymakers can create a more supportive environment where individuals can succeed and contribute positively to the local community and economy. The synergy of these efforts can lead to a more robust, resilient, and inclusive region that benefits all residents

CONCLUSION

This report provides a comprehensive view into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing workers in the IE. Its dual approach of utilizing both quantitative data and personal narratives provides a vivid depiction of working conditions, disparities in earnings and opportunities, and systemic inequalities, especially related to race, class, gender, immigrant status,and educational attainment.

Evident from the findings is the persistent gap between economic growth and equity. While there have been strides in job growth and earnings, these advancements have been unequally distributed. This has ramifications not only for the present workforce but has long-term implications for future generations. The region, characterized by its economic dynamism, is at a crossroads. Either it can continue on its current trajectory, risking exacerbated inequalities, or pivot towards a more inclusive model of economic growth, where all residents, regardless of their social background or educational attainment, can equally benefit.

The policy recommendations identified are not mere theoretical solutions but are vital, actionable steps that can address underlying challenges head-on. Emerging technologies, such as those related to automation and artificial intelligence, are rapidly changing the employment landscape, and as such workers and employers

need to be ready to adapt. However, standard skill metrics like educational attainment (e.g., a bachelor's degree) are often out of reach for many, particularly historically marginalized groups. By emphasizing improved educational and training opportunities, stronger worker protections, and comprehensive worker supports, the IE can transition towards a more equitable, sustainable, and just future, and be better prepared for new challenges, such as those related to climate change, an aging population, and technological changes at work.

We sincerely hope that workers, policymakers, community organizations, and advocacy groups harness the insights from this report as essential tools. Our aim is for these findings to catalyze meaningful change, encouraging stakeholders to organize and advocate vigorously for continued progress and growth, with a focus on true equity in work and environmental health across the region. Only through collective action and commitment can the IE ensure that economic prosperity is shared by all.

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DATA SOURCES USED

American Community Survey (ACS) provides annual household survey data collected from people who live in housing units as well as group quarters. It provides information on residents' earnings and employment, characteristics of their primary job, as well as residents' demographic characteristics, housing situation, living expenses, and commuting patterns.

Current Population Survey (CPS) provides annual household labor market survey data for the United States.

Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Danika Brockman, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0. IPUMS provides public access to census data, including ACS data.

Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) provides data on the number of jobs located in the region from a massive database that combines longitudinal microdata from various federal, state, and local government administrative records collected from employers and employees with information from various government surveys of employers and employees. It includes information on most public sector employees as well as about 95% of the formally employed U.S. private sector workforce. It provides county and MSA-level information on monthly earnings by industry and by age, gender, race, ethnicity and educational attainment. Since workers may have more than one job, they could be counted more than once in these statistics. For more information, including sources of data used and excluded employees, see: https://lehd.ces.census.gov/doc/QWI_101.pdf

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) provides data related to housing affordability and is based on 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) supports the Department's efforts to help create cohesive, economically healthy communities. PD&R is responsible for maintaining current information on housing needs, market conditions, and existing programs, as well as conducting research on priority housing and community development issues. PD&R provides reliable and objective data and analysis to help inform policy decisions, and it is committed to involving a greater diversity of perspectives, methods, and researchers in HUD research. Rent estimates at the 50th percentile (or median) are calculated for all Fair Market Rent areas.

TABLE 1 - SHARE OF GOOD JOBS BY RACE IN 2020

Race	Inland Empire	Southern CA	California (State)
Asian	38.6%	43%	47.5%
Black	33.6%	34%	35.2%
Latino	21.2%	21.4%	22.3%
Other	32.1%	36.7%	38.4%
White	43.0%	44.9%	46.6%
Total	29.3%	32.8%	36%

Source: ACS 2021 File

TABLE 2 - SHARE OF GOOD JOBS BY RACE AND GENDER IN 2020

Race & Gender	Inland Empire	Southern CA	California (State)
Asian Male	40.8%	47.2%	51.6%
Asian Female	36.4%	38.7%	43.1%
Black Male	36.2%	35.1%	35.8%
Black Female	31.2%	32.9%	34.5%
Latino Male	25.2%	23.5%	24.5%
Latina Female	16.2%	18.7%	19.4%
Other Male	35.5%	39.6%	41.5%
Other Female	29.1%	33.6%	35.1%
White Male	46%	48.5%	50.9%
White Female	39.4%	40.6%	41.4%
Total Male	32.7%	35.5%	39.0%
Total Female	25.3%	29.8%	32.6%
Total by Region, all Genders	29.3%	32.8%	36.0%

Source: ACS 2021 File

TABLE 3 - JOBS AND AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY (SHARE OF SECTORS IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (2021Q3 - 2022Q2))

	Inland Empire		Riverside		San Bernardino		Other SoCal		California	
	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry
Total Employment by Industry / Overall Average Earnings	1,582,651	$4,907	771,936	$4,834	810,714	$4,974	8,340,625	$6,326	17,190,809	$7,161
Health Care & Social Assistance	14.92%	$4,832	14.66%	$4,628	15.16%	$5,018	15.37%	$4,923	15.18%	$5,390
Transportation and Warehousing	13.01%	$4,379	9.65%	$4,356	16.20%	$4,392	3.55%	$5,821	4.58%	$5,901
Retail Trade	10.78%	$4,059	11.02%	$4,068	10.54%	$4,051	9.08%	$4,345	9.11%	$4,388
Accommodation and Food Services	9.88%	$2,766	11.52%	$2,974	8.31%	$2,487	9.11%	$2,917	8.78%	$2,970
Educational Services	8.40%	$5,518	9.11%	$5,606	7.72%	$5,419	8.22%	$5,707	8.20%	$5,728
Construction	7.58%	$5,545	10.10%	$5,316	5.18%	$5,970	4.59%	$6,684	5.38%	$6,701
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	7.49%	$4,076	6.79%	$4,212	8.15%	$3,960	7.13%	$5,198	6.60%	$5,287
Manufacturing	6.06%	$5,732	5.62%	$5,445	6.48%	$5,968	7.56%	$7,861	7.48%	$10,035
Wholesale Trade	4.43%	$6,731	3.42%	$6,787	5.38%	$6,699	4.37%	$7,726	3.77%	$8,084
Public Administration	4.27%	$7,711	4.37%	$7,492	4.18%	$7,925	3.00%	$7,632	4.01%	$7,598
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3.06%	$6,674	3.02%	$6,708	3.10%	$6,647	8.04%	$10,335	8.01%	$12,655
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2.67%	$3,840	2.76%	$3,840	2.58%	$3,840	3.09%	$4,167	2.98%	$4,299

TABLE 3 - JOBS AND AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY (SHARE OF SECTORS IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (2021Q3 - 2022Q2)) - CONTINUED

	Inland Empire		Riverside		San Bernardino		Other SoCal		California	
	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry	Jobs by Industry	Average Monthly Earnings by Industry
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.71%	$3,476	1.95%	$3,435	1.47%	$3,529	2.23%	$6,255	1.92%	$5,386
Finance and Insurance	1.67%	$7,959	1.35%	$8,217	1.97%	$7,792	3.60%	$12,581	3.16%	$14,516
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.33%	$5,404	1.37%	$5,414	1.29%	$5,394	2.04%	$6,972	1.74%	$7,021
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.87%	$3,279	1.46%	$3,238	0.30%	$3,461	0.89%	$3,679	2.31%	$3,647
Information	0.63%	$6,772	0.72%	$7,211	0.55%	$6,223	5.71%	$7,369	4.57%	$15,571
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.60%	$5,885	0.50%	$7,163	0.69%	$5,009	1.80%	$10,195	1.51%	$11,519
Utilities	0.57%	$9,848	0.54%	$8,612	0.61%	$10,894	0.56%	$11,037	0.62%	$10,705
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.10%	$8,612	0.06%	$7,631	0.13%	$9,034	0.05%	$8,062	0.10%	$11,229

Notes: Source: QWI (2021Q3 - 2022Q2)

Data Point: Beginning of year employment counts and average monthly earnings. Data is averaged across four quarters (2021Q3-2022Q2)

Rest of SoCal includes: Los Angeles County, Orange county, San Diego County, Ventura County, Santa Barbara County, and Imperial County.

TABLE 4 - TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT OVER TIME

	Inland Empire			Riverside			San Bernardino			Other SoCal			California		
Industry	Employment (2016Q3 2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	15275	13700	-10.31%	13209	11290	-14.53%	2066	2410	16.62%	73954	74373	0.57%	417076	396513	-4.93%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	945	1542	63.20%	345	448	29.86%	600	1094	82.38%	5841	4097	-29.85%	18897	16449	-12.96%
Utilities	9398	9065	-3.54%	4149	4148	-0.04%	5249	4918	-6.31%	46007	46859	1.85%	109808	106654	-2.87%
Construction	100176	120004	19.79%	64589	77999	20.76%	35588	42005	18.03%	353365	382646	8.29%	812386	924269	13.77%
Manufacturing	98349	95914	-2.48%	42351	43381	2.43%	55997	52533	-6.19%	661894	630818	-4.69%	1285176	1285784	0.05%
Wholesale Trade	67254	70085	4.21%	24957	26434	5.92%	42297	43651	3.20%	403968	364515	-9.77%	710712	648451	-8.76%
Retail Trade	170858	170541	-0.19%	84662	85077	0.49%	86197	85464	-0.85%	784608	757264	-3.49%	1613614	1566213	-2.94%
Transportation and Warehousing	112058	205863	83.71%	41771	74518	78.40%	70287	131345	86.87%	248775	296109	19.03%	579686	786999	35.76%
Information	11717	10029	-14.40%	6411	5558	-13.31%	5306	4471	-15.72%	452895	476557	5.22%	690287	785450	13.79%
Finance and Insurance	28170	26368	-6.40%	11609	10404	-10.38%	16561	15964	-3.61%	299926	300281	0.12%	542379	544029	0.30%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17947	20987	16.94%	9420	10563	12.13%	8527	10424	22.25%	162362	169971	4.69%	282664	299436	5.93%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	40968	48407	18.16%	20203	23300	15.33%	20765	25107	20.91%	593778	670480	12.92%	1223815	1376531	12.48%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	10350	9454	-8.66%	2871	3847	34.01%	7480	5607	-25.04%	128457	150072	16.83%	244618	259172	5.95%

TABLE 4 - TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT OVER TIME - CONTINUED

	Inland Empire			Riverside			San Bernardino			Other SoCal			California		
Industry	Employment (2016Q3 2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change	Employment (2016Q3-2017Q2	Employment (2021Q3-2022Q2)	Percentage Change
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	107386	118542	10.39%	47623	52441	10.12%	59763	66101	10.61%	566569	594762	4.98%	1104566	1134443	2.70%
Educational Services	132964	132901	-0.05%	69188	70299	1.61%	63776	62602	-1.84%	672346	685834	2.01%	1412077	1409836	-0.16%
Health Care and Social Assistance	204298	236099	15.57%	95207	113198	18.90%	109091	122902	12.66%	1139887	1281916	12.46%	2322772	2609873	12.36%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	26787	27016	0.86%	15388	15072	-2.06%	11398	11944	4.79%	202189	185876	-8.07%	361548	330008	-8.72%
Accommodation and Food Services	147020	156334	6.34%	83493	88943	6.53%	63527	67391	6.08%	808119	759965	-5.96%	1592129	1509717	-5.18%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	38974	42196	8.27%	19409	21317	9.83%	19566	20879	6.71%	267052	257649	-3.52%	530955	512289	-3.52%
Public Administration	64570	67607	4.70%	31937	33702	5.53%	32633	33905	3.90%	255226	250583	-1.82%	682288	688694	0.94%
Total Employment	140546	1582651	12.61%	688789	771936	12.07%	716673	810714	13.12%	8127215	8340625	2.63%	16537450	17190809	3.95%

Source: QWI

ENDNOTES

1 The variable used here is "citizen," which reports the citizenship status of foreign-born persons. In IPUMS-CPS, people born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or U.S. outlying areas were excluded from the question universe. Respondents were identified as belonging to one of three groups: citizens by virtue of being born abroad to American parents; naturalized citizens; and non-citizens (https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/CITIZEN#description_section).

2 The findings described here are presented in Table 3. They are based on the beginning of year employment counts and average monthly earnings provided by Quarterly Workforce Indicators. The data were averaged across four quarters: third quarter 2021 through the second quarter of 2022.

3 The variable used here is "trantime," which reports the total amount of time, in minutes, that it usually took the respondent to get from home to work daily in the past week, including waiting times for public transportation or carpools. For more information see: https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/TRANTIME#description_section

4 The variable used here is the "incwage," which reports each respondent's total pre-tax wage and salary income - that is, money received as an employee - for the previous year

5 Household income here is total money income of all household members age 15+ during the previous year by race of the household head

6 We should take the increase in mining with caution due to the small share of the industry.

7 In the ACS data, Southern California includes Los Angeles County, Orange county, San Diego County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County, Ventura County, Santa Barbara County, and Imperial County.

8 The earnings difference between the median earners and the relatively rich is measured by the 90/50 earnings ratio, i.e., the earnings ratio between earners at the 90th percentile or above, and median earners.

9 The bottom earnings refer to the 50/10 earnings ratio, which measures the inequality between median income earners and those whose earnings are in the 10th percentile or below.

10 The variable used here is the "hhincome," reports the total money income of all household members age 15+ during the previous year (https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/HHINCOME#description_section).

11 For a list of HRTP projects in the IE, see: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/paul.aguirre/viz/HighRoadAcrossCaliforniaBetaTest4/Dashboard1?publish=yes

12 Quote from personal correspondence with Ellen Reese on October 24, 2023. The authors thank Dr. Thomas for reviewing and revising this section of the report.

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