

# State of Work in the Inland Empire Part II: Pandemic, Polarization, Inflation, and Investment

November 15, 2023



# Land Acknowledgement

We at UCR would like to respectfully acknowledge and recognize our responsibility to the original and current caretakers of this land, water, and air: the Cahuilla [ka-wee- ahh], Tongva [tong-va], Luiseño [loo-say-ngo], and Serrano [se-ran-oh] peoples and all of their ancestors and descendants, past, present, and future. Today this meeting place is home to many Indigenous peoples from all over the world, including UCR faculty, students, and staff, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these homelands.

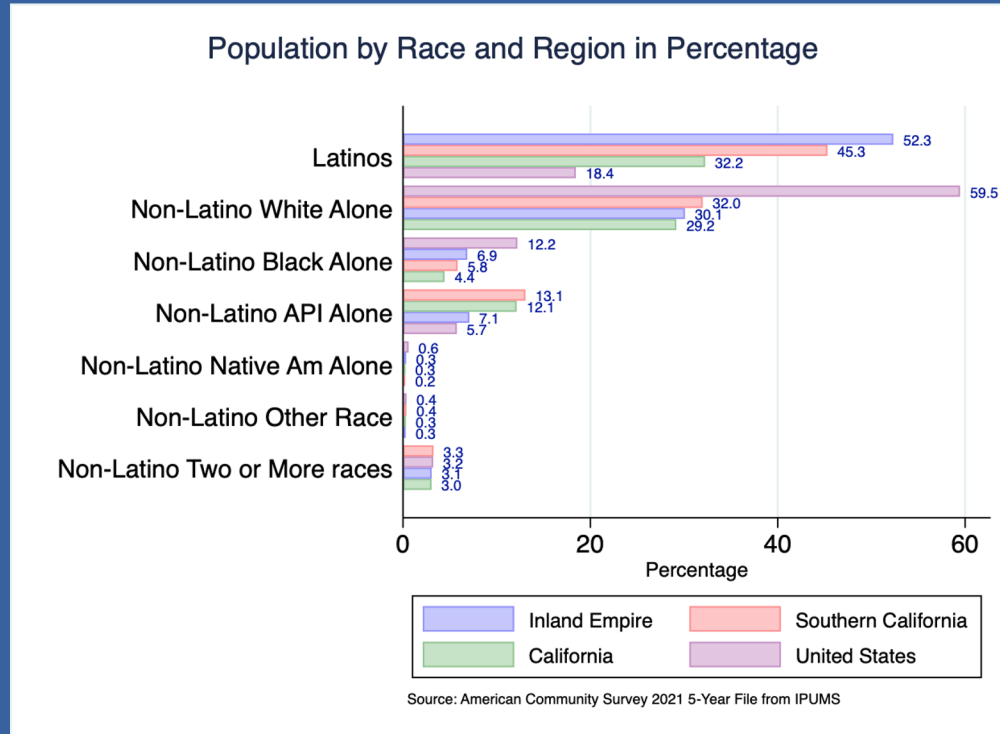


# State of Work in the Inland Empire

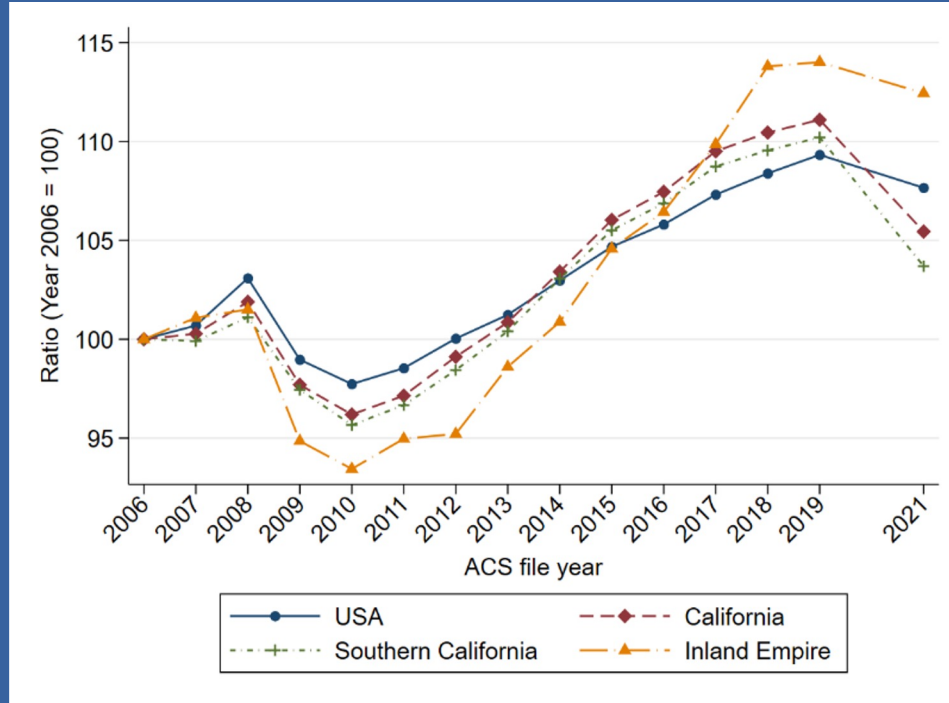


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# The Inland Empire Labor Force is Diverse



# There are 1,582,651 jobs in the IE and we have seen 12% job growth over the last 5 years



# Top 5 Industries Employing the Largest Percent of IE Workers & Average Wages

	Inland Empire		Other SoCal		California	
	Job Share	Average Monthly Earnings	Job Share	Average Monthly Earnings	Job Share	Average Monthly Earnings
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.92%	\$4,832	15.37%	\$4,923	15.18%	\$5,390
Transportation/Warehousing	13.01%	\$4,379	3.55%	\$5,821	4.58%	\$5,901
Retail Trade	10.78%	\$4,059	9.08%	\$4,345	9.11%	\$4,388
Accommodation and Food Services	9.88%	\$2,766	9.11%	\$2,917	8.78%	\$2,970
Educational Services	8.40%	\$5,518	8.22%	\$5,707	8.20%	\$5,728



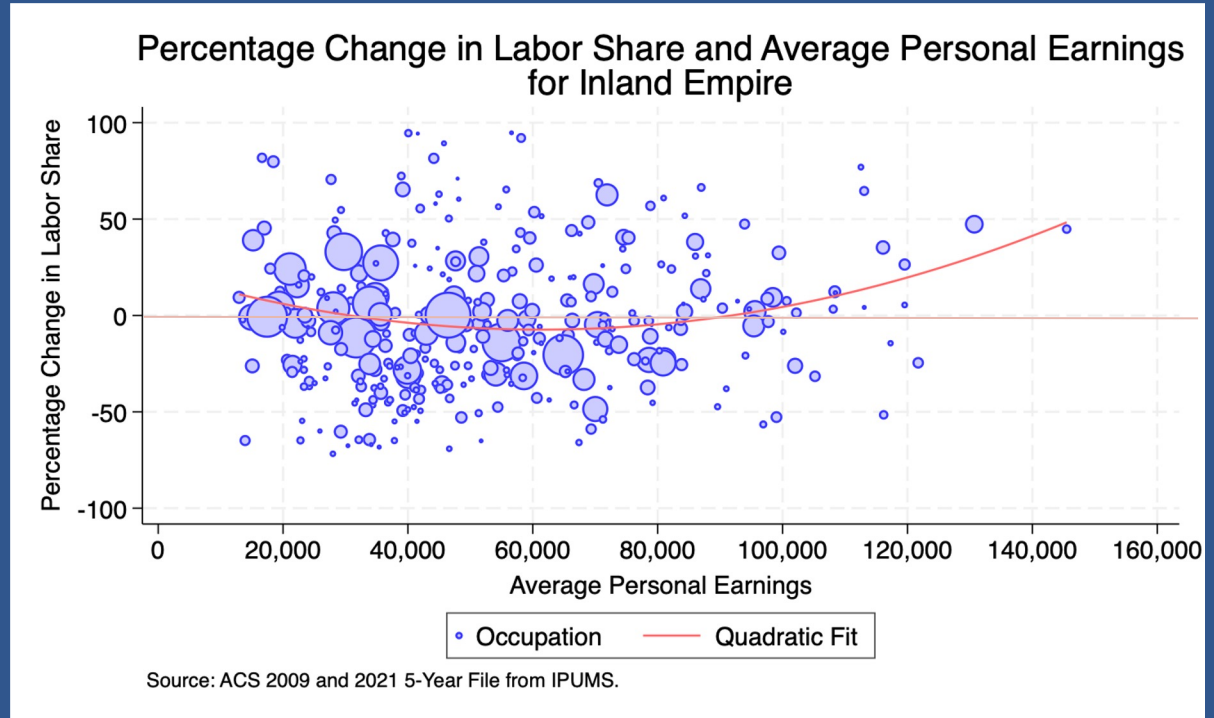
# Compared to California...

- All industries pay less on average in the IE
- Higher paying industries are under-represented in the IE, including
  - Information
  - Finance & Insurance
  - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
  - Management of Companies & Enterprises



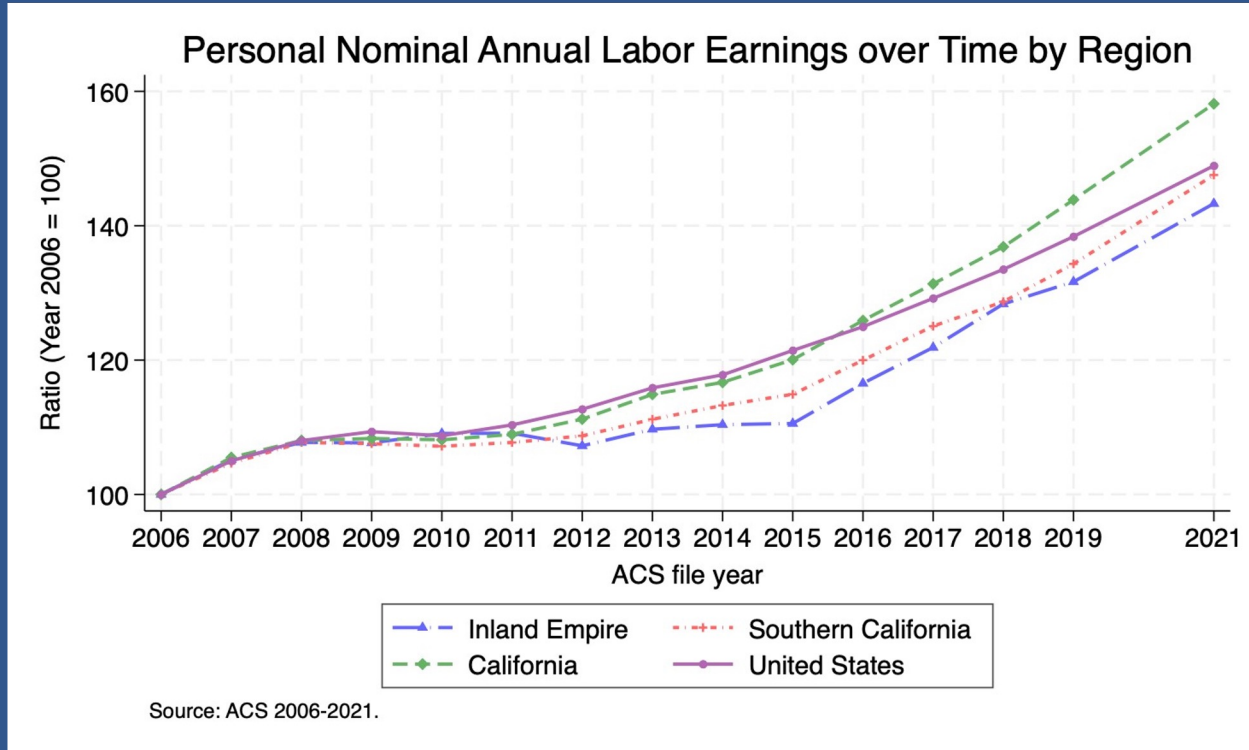
# Polarizing Job Growth Across Occupations

- Most job growth has been in low wage occupations, while mid-range occupations have lost labor-share
- 83 % growth in transportation and warehousing in the last 5 years
- 14 % increase in the number of workers with a BA

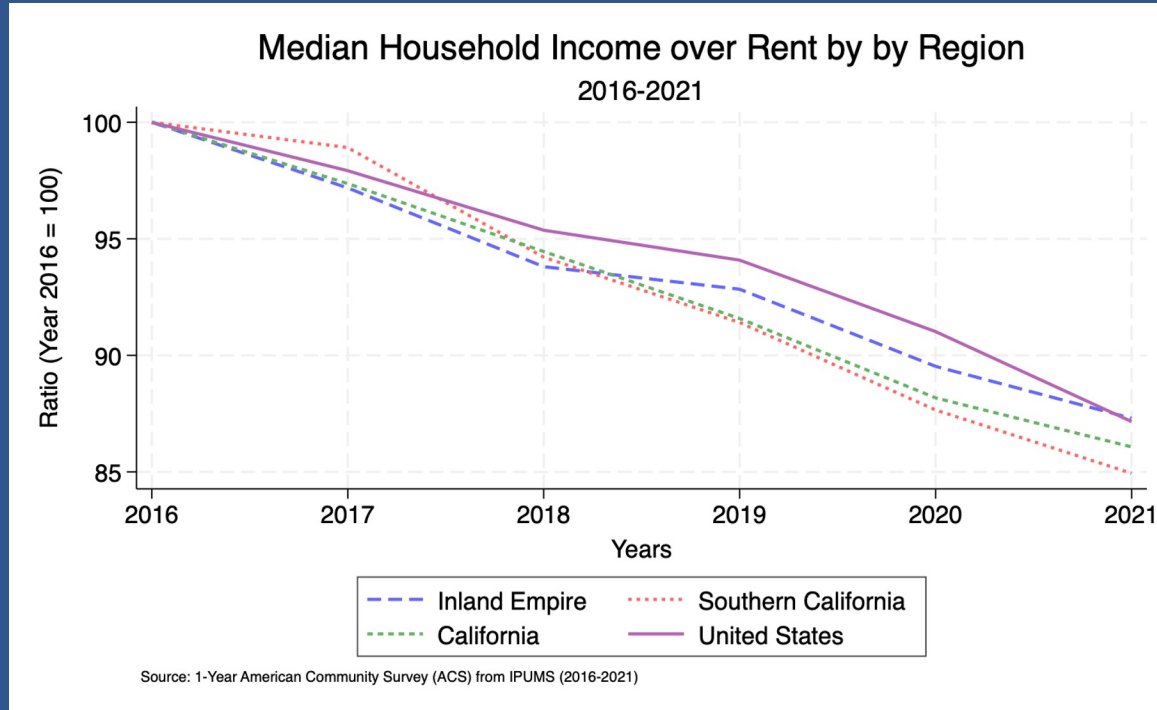




# Wages have risen...



# but not as much as housing prices



# Worker Profiles: Overview

- 19 in-depth interviews with diverse IE workers provide a holistic view of workers' experiences & their concerns about job quality.
  - Interviewees were diverse in their jobs, social characteristics, and geographic location where they worked
  - Interviews were conducted in both English & Spanish

*Special thanks to our Interview Team: Pedro Freire, Sara Bruene, Elvira De La Torre, KeAysia Jackson & Fatima Nelson*



# Worker Profiles: Self-Employed & Farmworkers

## Santiago (self-employed landscaper)

- Undocumented immigrant
- Services up to 15 homes daily sometimes in summer temperatures of 120°F
- Concerns:
  - Heat illness, high risk of workplace accidents (e.g., falling from tall trees on windy days), disrespect, low income & pressure to cut prices to get work

## Flor (Farmworker)

- 9th grade education level
- Concerns:
  - Unstable employment; Work location constantly changed making it difficult to master any particular skill & increase her speed.
  - Faced significant sexual harassment
  - Health & safety: heat illness & risk of falling off of stools



# Worker Profiles: Educational Workers & Delivery Drivers

## Eli (Gig Delivery Driver)

- Describes his work and income as, “going in waves:, but currently describes the market as “dead now.”
- Benefits of AB 5: receives an hourly minimum wage and a mileage stipend to ensure that his hourly pay is above the state-required minimum wage.
- Failed to receive support for job-related injuries when he was classified as an “independent contractor.”

## Grace (K-12 Teaching Assistant)

- Also works as a caregiver for her adult son, and works 15-30 in nursing homes per month.
- “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.”Feels undervalued that people discount special needs classroom assistant, “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.”



# Worker Profiles: Healthcare Workers & Food Services

Alexander (Radiologist)

- Competitive pay, 26 days off plus holidays and 12 sick days, health insurance & 401K retirement.

Dee (IHSS worker)

- Concerns: Low wages, wage theft (not being paid for client services), problems with the new electronic payment system.
- Appreciated SEIU 2015 contract victories & opportunities to receive newly incentivized job training programs through her union.

Zy (Barista at Starbucks)

- Low income & pay is “pretty unpredictable” due to changing work schedule.
- Faced retaliation for unionization; management, “Intentionally [made] our lives harder” after unionization. Management implemented new forms of disciplinary actions through coercive measures after unionizing
  - Such as having a separate handwritten sign in timesheet to keep track of work attendance, by the minute, outside of the electronic clock in system; which was a retaliatory measure used to coerce employees into subordinating themselves to management and intensify worker control.
- Removed security at her store which, “forced [her male coworkers] into being pseudo security guards...” without extra pay or proper training.



# Promising Initiatives

- High Road Training Partnerships
  - IE Black Worker Center's IEWorks Water Pre-Apprenticeship program
- Successful policy advocacy efforts by the labor movement
  - CA AB 378 (2019) gave 40,000 home-based child care providers the right to form a union
  - CA AB 701 (2021) restricts use of work quotas in warehouses & further protects warehouse workers from labor law violations
  - Creation of Fast Food Workers Council & a \$20/hour minimum wage for fast food workers (2022-2023)



# Promising Initiatives

- Expanding worker voice through worker organizing
  - Successful union contract campaigns
    - UC Academic Workers & UAW
    - Child Care Providers United
    - SEIU 2015 (IHSS Workers in San Bernardino)
    - UPS Delivery Drivers & Warehouse Workers
  - Other victories through worker organizing & action
    - IE Amazon Workers United





# Policy Options

- Education and skill training
- Worker protections (e.g., regulations, policies, welfare accommodations and services, etc.)
- Immigrant rights (e.g., policies and programs)
- Green economy and sustainability (e.g., job training, technology adoption, standards, planning, inclusive practices)
- Comprehensive worker support policies (e.g., housing, health and wellness, wraparound supports)



# Panel Discussion

Moderated by Elvira De La Torre



**Dr. Nosakhere Thomas**  
Executive Director,  
Inland Empire Black  
Worker Center



**Dr. Angelo Farooq**  
Chairman,  
California Workforce  
Development Board



**Celene Perez**  
Chief of Staff,  
Inland Empire Labor  
Center



# LABR 001: Intro to Labor Studies

Lecturer James Anderson

This course examines the social forces shaping labor conditions and workers' struggles for justice.

Seating is limited to 75 students, so we recommend signing up early.

Tues & Thurs at 11 am-12:20 pm, Olmsted Hall, Room 421  
Course Number (CRN): 55005

# Thank You!



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**Thank you to all of our Authors: Michael Bates, Sara Bruene, Eric E. Calderon, Elvira De La Torre, Pedro Freire, Jingyan Guo, Gregory B. Hutchins, KeAysia Jackson, Manisha Kapoor, Fatima Nelson, Zhouyu Qiu, Ellen Reese, Gary Rettberg, and Beth C. Tamayose**



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