

Governing Inequities Through Police in the Inland Empire

Ángel Mendiola Ross
Ph.D. student, Sociology Department
University of California, Berkeley

July 2020

*Paper commissioned by the Blueprint for Belonging project,
Othering & Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley*

The Inland Empire of Southern California is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. Home to nearly 4.5 million residents—up from 3.2 million in 2000—the region is also experiencing historic job growth. The July 2019 jobs numbers show that the Inland Empire (or the IE) added 35,300 jobs over the year, outpacing neighboring Orange County by over 10,000 jobs.¹ In the past 30 years, it has also transformed into one of the most diverse regions in the nation, going from 73 percent non-Hispanic white in 1980 to majority people of color within two decades.

But for nearly every sign that one might lift up as evidence of economic progress in the IE, there is a contrary sign of rising inequality. Poverty is increasing, many communities are still struggling to recover from the Great Recession and the ensuing decline in homeownership, and local resource decisions hardly appear motivated by a spirit of belonging. Job growth has been concentrated in low-wage retail, food, and warehouse work. Substantial gains in homeownership in the region, especially among Black and Latinx households, were completely wiped out by the foreclosure crisis. Black homeownership in the Inland Empire, for example, grew from 48.6 percent in 2000 to 50.4 percent in 2010 before dropping 8 percentage points to 42.2 percent just five years later.²

¹ Margot Roosevelt, “California Job Growth Is Outpacing the Nation’s,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2019-08-16/california-job-growth-is-outpacing-the-nations>.

² According to data from the National Equity Atlas accessed in December 2019: [https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Homeownership/By_race~ethnicity:38486/Riverside-San_Bernardino-Ontario,_CA_Metro_Area/false/Year\(s\):2010/](https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Homeownership/By_race~ethnicity:38486/Riverside-San_Bernardino-Ontario,_CA_Metro_Area/false/Year(s):2010/)