

Equitable Energy Transitions: Understanding Worker Concerns and

Cultivating 'Just Transitions' in Shifting Industries

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

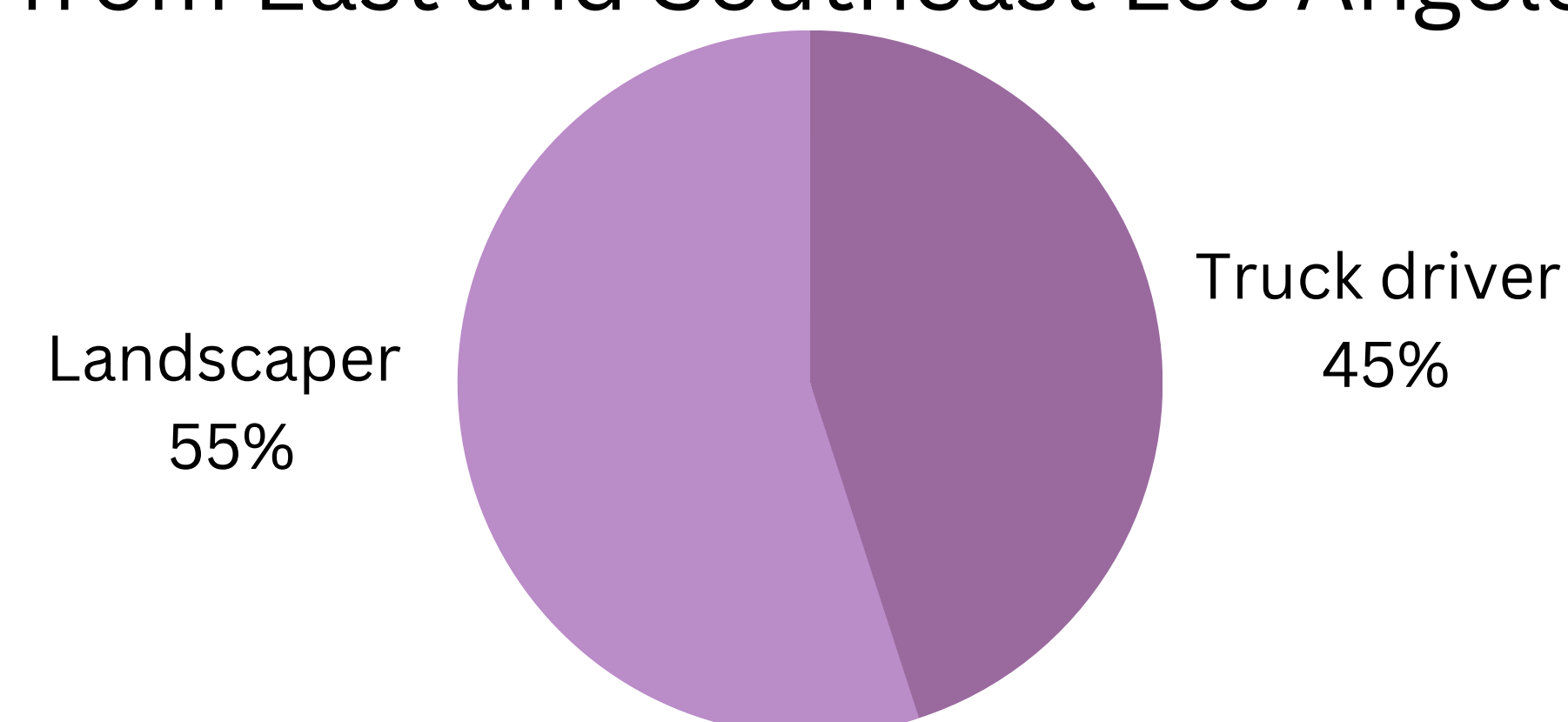
2024 is the year of electrification of devices and vehicles. The sale of new gas-powered lawn equipment for contractors and homeowners will be phased out.¹ Companies and federal agencies will be required to phase in zero-emission vehicles to replace conventional diesel trucks. Due to the electrification, workers are growing increasingly concerned.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the key concerns of workers in industries undergoing a 'just transition,' and how can effective education about these changes be facilitated to workers?

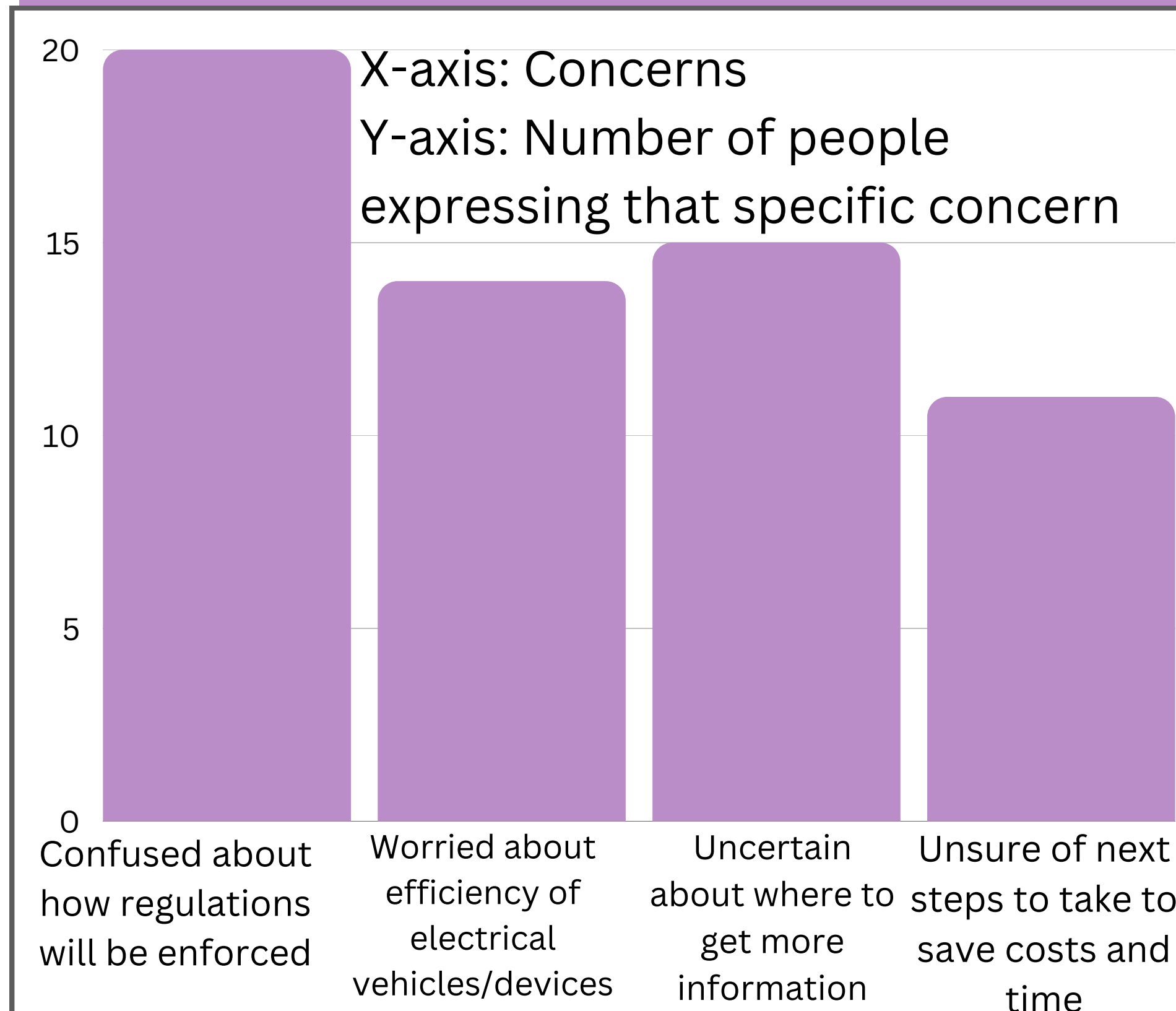
METHODS

Participants interviewed in this study were landscapers or truck drivers from East and Southeast Los Angeles.



RESULTS

INTERVIEWS



Out of 20 participants interviewed, 4 common worries were shared. Enforcement of regulations, efficiency of electrical vehicles/devices, finding sources of information on the energy transition, and next steps to take for their contracting services.

TESTIMONIES

5 participants expressed not wanting to get sick from all the chemicals, but not wanting to use inefficient electrical device.

8 of the landscaper participants were unaware of the mandate of using electrical devices in 2024 and are unsure of how to stay updated.

All testimonies were collected from my phone interviews with participants.

CONCLUSIONS

INTERPRETATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

All of the landscaping workers I interviewed are independent contractors and I believe this can play a role in being unaware of regulations. One of the reasons for becoming independent contractors can be due to immigration status where 1 in 5 landscapers are undocumented.² Many people received information about regulations from their friends and found it to be a reliable source. For truck drivers, many expressed a greater lack of autonomy because they follow orders from company guidelines.

For future direction of this research, it is critical to explore further how to also consider the unique challenges undocumented immigrant workers face in energy-impacted industries to ensure a true 'just transition.' It is also important to explore further the financial cost of 'just transitions' and how governments can financially support frontline low-income workers.

REFERENCES

- 1 Lopez, N. (2022, October 27). Going Electric: Opponents clash as California aims to force diesel trucks off the road. CalMatters. <https://calmatters.org/environment/2022/10/electric-trucks-california-rules/>
- 2 Svajlenka, N. P. (2023, July 25). Protecting undocumented workers on the pandemic's Front Lines. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/protecting-undocumented-workers-pandemics-front-lines-2/>