Largest Ethnic Population in Each Tract

This map identifies the leading or numerically largest ethnic group in each census tract. (Scroll down to see map.) It provides a useful simplification of the very complex ethnic geography of Southern California by creating regions defined by which group outnumbers the others. Whites predominate in numbers in areas of more expensive housing, such as coastal areas and foothill zones close to mountains and foothills. This is because, compared to the other groups, they have had more money to be able to buy in such attractive areas. Because Mexicans now outnumber Whites in Southern California, it is not surprising that Mexicans now outnumber Whites in many areas where housing is more moderately priced, such as in suburbs built before the 1960s. A half-century ago, however, when Whites far outnumbered Mexicans and all other ethnic groups, most of these places now showing as Mexican were dominated by Whites.

Small areas on the map emphasize the enclaves or areas of concentration of different groups. The largest area in which Blacks predominate is South Los Angeles, although that area has shifted from east of Interstate 110 (the Harbor Freeway) and Watts over to the west of that freeway as many Mexicans have settled in the last thirty years in that former Black ghetto. Also evident on this map are more middle-class Black settlements, the largest of which are Altadena and the area just east of Gardena, including Carson. As mentioned in the introduction, concentrations of specific Asian or Hispanic national groups are explained in some detail in The Ethnic Quilt.

This map shows the importance of Chinese in two sections of the San Gabriel Valley. In the west valley around Alhambra is the large settlement that began in the 1970s and has proven so popular with Chinese immigrants. To the east is a region around Walnut and La Habra Heights, which generally has newer housing and is also home of Filipinos and other Asians. Los Angeles’ Chinatown and its expansion to the northwest show up in a small area north of Downtown.

Filipinos in Southern California number over half a million -- approximately the size of the combined populations of Chinese and Taiwanese. Because Filipinos are more dispersed and mixed with other groups, they are not as noticeable on this map as the Chinese. Koreans show up both in the old in-town settlement called Koreatown and in the newer suburb of Cerritos. Because Japanese immigration has not been large, they appear only in and around Gardena, an older suburb in which many Japanese Americans settled in the 1950s. One has to look closely at the map to see the enclave of Central Americans west and north of Downtown.

See map below: