Whites

As mentioned before, we include in our maps and discussion only those Whites who did not also identify as Hispanic. (Scroll down to see three maps.) This group has been dominant demographically, politically, and economically in California for over a century and a half, as many White Americans migrated from states in the Midwest, Northeast, and South to the Golden State. Los Angeles County was the state’s largest single center of Whites since the 1920s, but by the 1970s many Whites were leaving the county. Most were moving to suburban counties in Southern California and to other states in the West, particularly Arizona and Nevada. At the same time the number of White migrants arriving from other states or countries was declining.

Change. This net out-migration of Whites has gained momentum over time, with many also leaving even the suburban counties of Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. The result is that in the period from 1990 to 2010 the number of Whites in the five counties of our study area declined by 17 percent. Readers interested in more detail on the migrations of Whites might want to read our two research articles: “Patterns of Population Change in California, 2000-2010,” The California Geographer 51 (2011), and “Migrants Between California and Other States,” The California Geographer 47 (2007).

This reduction in White numbers is evident in the predominance of red dots on the change map. A closer look at the map pattern as it relates to the history of residential settlement in Southern California reveals that White declines are most common in residential areas first built in the 1960s or earlier. Depending on housing prices, the homes and apartments in these older neighborhoods from which Whites are departing were then eagerly sought by Latinos, Blacks, and Asians looking to move to better neighborhoods.

Armenians, both immigrants and U.S.-born Armenians, generally identified racially as White in addition to reporting an Armenian ancestry. Glendale became very attractive to Armenian immigrants, especially those from Iran and Lebanon, beginning in the 1970s. Although the Armenian change map shows a clear growth of Armenian numbers in Glendale and the east San Fernando Valley, the coalescing and overprinting of dots tends to obscure the prominence of Armenian growth in and around Glendale.
The many localities where Whites have grown in numbers are usually newer suburban developments, most commonly in neighborhoods of more expensive homes on the outward fringe of older settled areas. For example, such areas of growing White numbers are in Stevenson Ranch and the newer sections of Santa Clarita, much of southern Orange County, and the west side of Fontana in San Bernardino County. White increases are especially evident in the stretch of towns in Riverside County served by Interstate 15, anchored by Temecula at its southern end. In some areas of the far fringe of major settlement, housing prices are often lower. Such areas include parts of Palmdale and Victorville in the Mojave Desert.

Some older, more central neighborhoods of cities also show White increases if much older housing has been modernized and upgraded, a process often called gentrification, or if new housing has been built. Such gentrification has occurred just north and west of Downtown L.A. and in highly localized parts of Glendale and Santa Monica.

**Percentage and income.** The very low percentage White areas are older areas of cities. Almost all of these were predominantly White a half century or more ago, but White out-movement to newer suburbs opened up this older and less expensive housing to a range of non-Whites. Once this process of ethnic change in older neighborhoods gathered steam and new suburban housing was built, part of the motivation of many if not most Whites in leaving older neighborhoods was “White flight”, their desire to leave neighborhoods with growing minority populations.

When the map of White income levels is compared to that of percent Whites, it is clear that Whites are still predominant in many, if not most, high-income neighborhoods. The largest cluster of these is in and near the Santa Monica Mountains, south and west of the U.S. 101 Freeway. Some are well known cities like Malibu and Beverly Hills, and others are in the west San Fernando Valley, including Calabasas, and in nearby parts of Ventura County. In Orange County most high-percentage White cities are along the coast and inland in newer residential developments of southern Orange County such as Mission Viejo. Not all high-income areas have such high percentages of Whites. Because Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and other Asians have developed important concentrations in Gardena, Torrance, and parts of the San Gabriel Valley, many Asians with high incomes have settled in the attractive hills of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and the foothill communities of the San Gabriel Mountains such as Claremont. The net effect of these changes is that some high-income neighborhoods are no longer as strongly White as they used to be.

See maps below.
Five-county 2010 population of persons of Non-Hispanic White race is 6,004,314 and change in that population between 1990 and 2010 is a decrease of 1,252,878. Census 2010 race data are from SF1. 1990 estimates of race population in 2010 tracts are based on the 1990 Fullcount table created by John R. Logan, Zengwang Xu, and Brian Stults. http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010/Researcher/Bridging.htm
Five-county population of Non-Hispanic Whites of a single race only is 6,004,354.
Bar length indicates proportion of all valid tracts included in a category.
In most cases a category includes 2, 3, 5, 10, 30, 40, or 50 percent of the included tracts.
The bar length of the excluded tracts is not related to its tract count.
Non-Hispanic White Median Household Income
2008 - 2012

Bar length indicates proportion of all valid tracts included in a category.
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