

# CHINESE IMMIGRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON URBAN MANAGEMENT IN LOS ANGELES

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## **Abstract**

This paper reviews the Chinese immigration history in Los Angeles, with Chinatown representing its urbanization process and San Gabriel Valley representing its suburbanization process. These two processes are distinct and have different impacting factors. This empirical study also compares similarities and differences of the urban development patterns between the Chinese Americans and the mainstream white Americans. Furthermore, the paper examines the implications of Chinese immigration on local urban management from political, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects.

**Keywords:** urbanization, suburbanization, Los Angeles, Chinatown, San Gabriel Valley.

## **1. Introduction**

Los Angeles County is the most populous, multi-ethnic county in the United States (U.S.) with an existing total population exceeding 10 million. Of all the U.S. counties, Los Angeles County has most Chinese American population. In the year 2000, the County's total Chinese American population amounted to 377,301, which was 33.6% and 15.6% of all Chinese American population living in California (1,122,187) and U.S. (2,422,970), respectively (Source: <http://www.ameredia.com/resources/demographics/chinese.html>). Therefore, examining Chinese Americans' urban development patterns in Los Angeles clearly has its national significance. A good urban management requires a clear understanding about its population, including ethnic population. With the globalization trend and emergence of China, Chinese Americans will play an ever important role in future American urbanmanagement, economy and politics.

This paper intends to unfold this research from three perspectives. The first perspective is to review the Chinese immigration history in Los Angeles County from urban development's standpoint: first urbanization (represented by Chinatown), then suburbanization (represented by San Gabriel Valley). The second perspective is to compare the Chinese American urban development pattern with the

America's mainstream society urban development pattern, through which major similarities and differences can be highlighted. The third perspective is to examine the implications of Chinese immigration on local urban management from political, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects. Based on this empirical research, a concluding section will summarize research findings.

## 2. Geographic Distributions of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles

Figure 1 shows the Los Angeles County racial/ethnic diversity in 2000. The Anglo population used to be distributed everywhere, but now the region has become highly segregated along racial/ethnic lines. In the year 2000, within the county area, the Anglo population resided in the outlying areas, the Black populations were primarily found in the south/central Los Angeles, whereas most Chinese Americans were clustered in the San Gabriel Valley, as coded by red color shown as "Majority API (Asian Pacific Islander)."

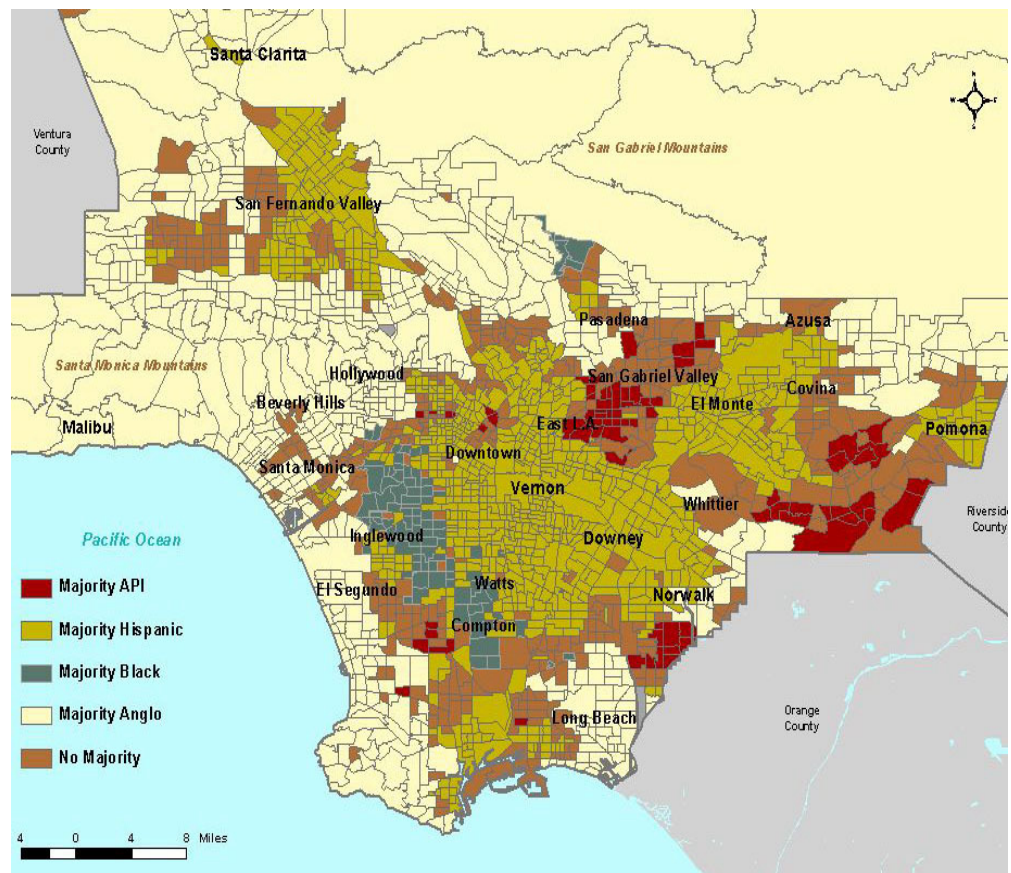


FIGURE 1 LOS ANGELES COUNTY: RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN 2000  
Source: <http://lewis.spsr.ucla.edu/special/metroamerica/ladiversity/Newr00.jpg>

In Los Angeles County, Chinatown, which is located immediately north of downtown area, symbolizes the early Chinese American urbanization process, while San Gabriel Valley east of downtown area can properly be labeled as the so-called “ethnoburb,” or ethnic suburban settlement housing more recent Chinese immigrants (Li, 1997). Figures 2 and 3 show the geographic locations of existing Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County, respectively. Within San Gabriel Valley, there is a recent tendency for Chinese Americans to gradually migrate from the western valley area (e.g., Monterey Park, Alhambra, San Gabriel) to the eastern valley area (e.g., Rowland Heights, Hacienda Heights, Diamond Bar), as well as to other outlying areas (Cerritos, Irvine, and rest of Orange County). Therefore, the Chinese Americans in Los Angeles area have clearly undergone both urbanization and suburbanization processes, which constitute the focus of this research.

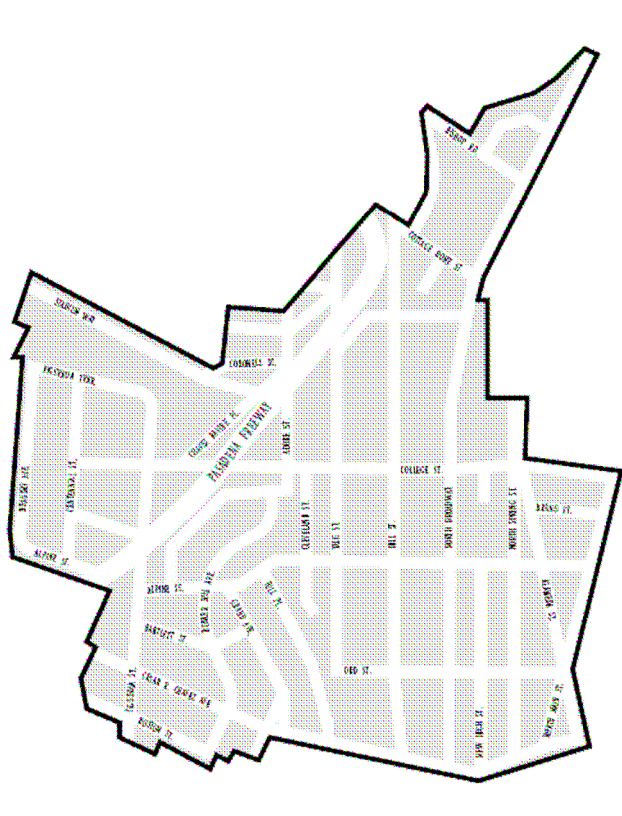


FIGURE 2 MAP OF CHINATOWN, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Source: <http://www.crala.org/internet-site/Projects/Chinatown/upload/Chinatown-Map-in-PDF.pdf>

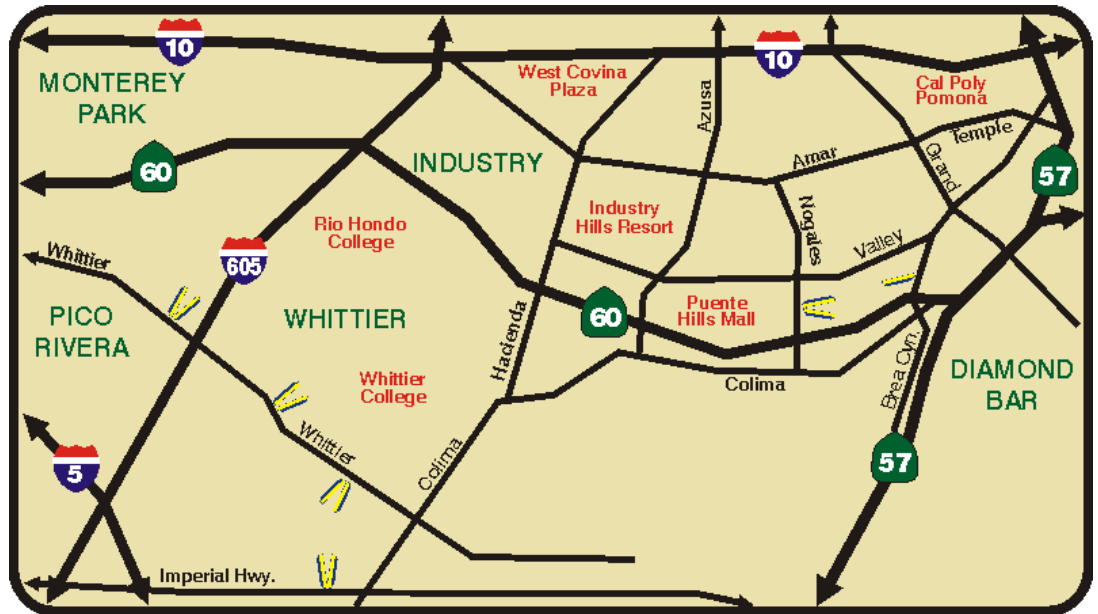


FIGURE 3 MAP OF SAN GABRIEL VALLEY, LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
Source: <http://www.generaloutdoor.com/MapSGV.htm>

### 3. Los Angeles Chinatown as the Ethnic Enclave

The Los Angeles Chinatown is a typical ethnic enclave. The Chinese were the first in the sequence of Asian groups that entered Southern California. The existing Chinatown shown in Figure 2 is a new Chinatown established in 1938. Before 1938, there was an old Chinatown, which was torn down due to the construction of the Los Angeles Union Station at the same site. Therefore, old Chinatown and new Chinatown need to be introduced separately.

#### 3.1 Old Chinatown (Pre-1938)

In the 1860s, Chinese began to settle in the east of the old City Plaza in Los Angeles. The early Chinese ethnic enclave was concentrated on Calle de Los Negros (Negro Alley), a narrow street just one block long. This was almost the only place in the city where Chinese were permitted to live unless they were servants in the homes of white families. Therefore, Chinatown was a ghetto at that time. The population grew as many Chinese men who had been scattered around Southern California in gangs of farm and construction laborers left that work and headed for a less itinerant life in Los Angeles. By 1890, a bustling Chinese quarter had grown up southeast of the plaza and just east of Alameda Street (Allen and Turner, 1997).

In 1910, Chinatown was clearly the focal point of the Chinese population in Los Angeles, but some Chinese produce sellers still lived near their old vegetable fields, and a few Chinese servants were found in other parts of the city. Although Chinatown remained as a residential and business center through the 1920s, Chinese families and many of the elderly bachelors began moving to other sections of the city. In 1933, the demolition of this Old Chinatown began. The space was ultimately used for the new railroad terminal, Union Station, which prompted the relocation of Chinatown in 1938. Table 1 summarizes the major events that happened in the old Chinatown in Los Angeles before 1938.

TABLE 1 EVENTS OF OLD CHINATOWN IN LOS ANGELES

Years	Events
1850	The first two Chinese were recorded to be in Los Angeles.
1870	An identifiable "Chinatown" of 200 or so persons was situated on Calle de Los Negros, Street of the Dark Hued Ones, consisting of laundrymen, market gardeners, agricultural and ranch workers, and road builders. Old Chinatown gradually flourished, expanding eastward from the El Pueblo Plaza across Alameda Street and eventually attaining a population of over 3,000.
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Acts inhibited any real growth for many years.
1890-1910	Old Chinatown was in its heyday, with 15 or so streets and alleys, and perhaps 200 building units, a Chinese opera theater, three temples, a newspaper, and its own telephone exchange.
1913	A large portion of Old Chinatown was entangled in a three-way litigation suit between the Apablaza family and the City of Los Angeles over the ownership of Chinatown streets. On December 12, 1913, all suits were dropped and six acres of Old Chinatown property were sold for \$310,000, possibly for the Southern Pacific track ways.
1914	A large deal was concluded for the acquisition of all Chinatown lying east of Alameda Street.
1931	A California Supreme Court decision was upheld approving land condemnations and the construction of the new Union Station at the site of Old Chinatown.
1935	The Chinese relocation proposal was accepted by the City of Los Angeles.
1936-1938	Relocation plan and development of new Chinatown began.

Source: Cheng, S. and Kwok, M. (1988). *The Golden Years of Los Angeles Chinatown: The Beginning*. Reprinted from The Los Angeles Chinatown 50<sup>th</sup> Year Guidebook. <http://www.chinatownla.com/hisculture.htm>.

### 3.2 New Chinatown (Post-1938)

In 1938, the new Chinatown was built about half a mile to the north, between Hill and Broadway. Although this new Chinatown was designed particularly to attract tourists, the poverty of most Chinese

and the restrictions on where they could live meant that Chinatown remained the heart of the “old” Los Angeles Chinese community as of 1940. At that time, the only other Chinese residential concentration was near produce markets and industry, in the same area where Chinese had farmed forty years earlier, roughly between San Pedro Street and Central Avenue and from 7<sup>th</sup> Street south to East Adams. Residents of both areas were Cantonese in speech and customs (Allen and Turner, 1997).

Beginning in the 1960s, Chinatown became much more diverse in terms of the backgrounds of its Chinese residents and business people. Immigrants, whose numbers grew steadily between the 1950s and 1990s, came from many different parts of China, as well as from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. Chinatown changed particularly fast during the 1980s, as more and more Chinese from Southeast Asia opened up businesses there.

At present, the new Chinatown encompasses several blocks along north Broadway and Hill Street. It is the home to 9,029 Chinese people living there in 2000, and also fulfills a major tourist function. Table 2 lists the major events that happened in new Chinatown after 1938.

TABLE 2 EVENTS OF NEW CHINATOWN IN LOS ANGELES

Years	Events
1938	On June 25, 1938, ex-California’s Governor Frank F. Merriam and a host of dignitaries dedicated Los Angeles Chinatown’s Central Plaza in a gala Grand Opening ceremony.
1940s	After the United States and China became allies during World War II, existing laws preventing Chinese immigration were gradually relaxed.
1950s	Restrictive covenants on the use and ownership of property were removed. As the result of these developments, Chinese Americans could live in other neighborhoods and gain access to new types of jobs.
1965	With elimination of immigration restrictions in 1965, the Chinese American population began to increase greatly.
1970s	Since 1970, an increasing number of Southeast Asian immigrants have arrived, some as refugees. In addition, there are many recent arrivals from Hong Kong, Taiwan and all parts of China. Many have low to moderate incomes and are elderly. They regard Chinatown as their entry community because of language and culture issues.
1980s – Present	Chinatown became more diversified in terms of its business types and origin of people. With the suburbanization of Chinese Americans in the San Gabriel Valley starting in the 1970s, Chinatown’s status has relatively declined, but remained as a social, spiritual and cultural base of the Chinese heritage.

Source: The Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles. (2002). *Chinese Americans in Los Angeles: A Brief History*. <http://www.camla.org/history.htm>.

### 3.3 Summary of Factors Affecting Chinatown Formation

Overall, Chinatown has a low degree of polarization in socio-economic status and occupational structure. And the people living in Chinatown are primarily inward looking and form a self-contained community.

The formation of Chinatown in Los Angeles was not only affected by general urbanization factors, such as agglomeration economies and geographical adjacency to downtown, but also profoundly shaped by social, cultural, and political factors including:

- Chinese immigrants were politically and economically weak;
- Chinese immigrants were linguistically and culturally isolated. Many new Chinese immigrants heavily relied on various voluntary organizations for mutual aid and survivals (Kuo, 1977);
- Chinatown was a result of forced segregation. As Espiritu (1992) put it, “because groups possess unequal power, they face unequal choices in these encounters. For the less powerful groups, ethnicity is not always voluntary, but may be imposed by a more powerful group”;
- Chinatown had almost all Chinese in blocks and sections in inner cities; and
- Chinatown had a clear ethnic boundary.

According to Zhou (1992), “English-language ability, cultural factors, and systematic discrimination still remain significant hindrances to the residential integration of immigrant Chinese.” Chinatown is a typical “urban village.” (Gans, 1962). Chinatown is also an “ecological community” as defined by the Chicago School of Sociology (Mellor, 1977). The reason why Chinatown is normally located in downtown (for example, Los Angeles Chinatown, San Francisco Chinatown, and New York Chinatown) has something to do with racial discrimination, the needs of Chinese business (laundry, restaurants, services, etc.) close to its customers living in downtown, cultural/linguistic barrier, social cohesiveness within the ethnic group, and others. And of course, that the transportation means were primitive before 1965 was also a factor.

### 4. San Gabriel Valley as the “Ethnoburb”

The massive suburbanization movement in Los Angeles County occurring after the World War II was attributed to many factors, including development of affordable housing in an expanding metropolitan

periphery, widespread availability of automobiles, and improved transportation connections between these new suburbs and older city center.

This suburbanization movement led many Chinese residents to move out of Chinatown and other central locations, and into the older suburbs, from which whites were vacating. These areas, variously pioneered by Japanese and blacks in earlier decades, became Los Angeles' most important areas of multi-ethnic housing during the 1960s. Thus, by 1970, many long-term resident Chinese families had moved into the predominantly black West Adams District and into predominantly Japanese Crenshaw District. Others pushed to the east, beyond Lincoln Heights and the Mexican Eastside, into Monterey Park and Alhambra, establishing a foundation for the large-scale Chinese immigration and settlement that would begin during the 1970s. The most prominent Chinese population suburbanization in Los Angeles County started in the 1970s with the major destination to be the San Gabriel Valley. Now, many new Chinese immigrants have settled in South Los Angeles County (Cerritos, Long Beach), and Orange County (Irvine), beyond the San Gabriel Valley.

#### **4.1 Overview of the San Gabriel Valley**

As illustrated in Figure 3, the San Gabriel Valley, which has been dubbed as "China Valley", is one of the most important subregions in Los Angeles County with a fast population growth and a drastic socioeconomic transformation. Due to its suburban location with a high concentration of the recent Chinese immigrants, the San Gabriel Valley is an ideal place to examine Chinese Americans' suburbanization process and the associated factors.

The San Gabriel Valley currently includes 30 incorporated cities plus unincorporated areas. Its total land area is 345 square miles, of which 30 incorporated cities have a combined land area of 282 square miles.

According to the year 2000 population census, 30 incorporated cities had a combined total population of 1,425,590. Of the 30 incorporated cities, Pomona and Pasadena were the two most populous cities, with a total population of 149,473 and 133,936, respectively. Pomona's land area (22.8 square miles) is very close to Pasadena's (23.1 square miles).

Since Monterey Park is the Chinese American center of San Gabriel Valley, it is introduced first, followed by other cities.



#### **4.2 Monterey Park: the Starting Point of the Chinese Suburbanization in the San Gabriel Valley**

The City of Monterey Park is the largest and earliest Chinese American settlement in the San Gabriel Valley. It is also the earliest suburban extended Chinatown in North America. The suburbanization of the Chinese Americans in Los Angeles County began in Monterey Park in the 1970s. The total number of immigrants to Monterey Park between 1983 and 1990 alone was as high as 5,575 (Li, 1999). More than 40% of the Monterey Park residents are Chinese Americans. Below are the highlights of the City's socio-economic transformation from 1960 to present:

- In 1960, Monterey Park was an Anglo town (85% Anglo, 12% Latino, 3% Asian). Later on, this Anglo town was giving its way to the suburban aspirations of Latinos and Japanese Americans;
- The origin of the Chinese push into the San Gabriel Valley can be traced to a single Chinese immigrant, Frederick Hsieh, who arrived as a student in 1963. Hsieh decided in the 1970s to develop America's first suburban Chinatown, and for this he chose Monterey Park, a suburban city a few miles east of Los Angeles. Advertising Monterey Park as the "Chinese Beverly Hills" in Hong Kong and Taiwan newspapers, he attracted buyers of land, homes, and business. Many of these families feared political changes in Hong Kong and Taiwan and wanted a more secure investment;
- Chinese immigration in the 1970s and 1980s included a higher proportion of wealthy people than is usually found among immigrants. A great number of Chinese immigrants bought homes in and around Monterey Park, and many soon opened businesses in the area, frequently catering to the needs of the growing Chinese population. Other businesses that were located outside Chinese concentrations tended to serve the general population;
- By 1980, the accelerated immigration of second- and third-generation Latinos and second-generation Japanese Americans had significantly changed the ethnic dynamics of the city (28% Anglo, 39% Latino, and 33% Asian). There was also a small but growing population of African Americans;
- In the 1980s, because of the large-scale influx of Chinese immigration from Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia, the ethnic proportions in Monterey Park once again shifted. In 1986, the City had 51% Asian compared to 15.8% Anglo, 30.5% Latino, and 1.9% Black;
- By 1990, the City had a majority Asian population (Ong, Bonacich and Cheng, 1994). The San Gabriel Valley had become the largest and the most intensive Chinese settlement within

Southern California. By 1990, Monterey Park had experienced such a large in-movement of Chinese and departure of whites and others that was 36% Chinese and was often referred to as "Little Taipei."

**4.3 Spillovers of the Chinese Americans to the Rest of the San Gabriel Valley**

More recently, the Chinese communities of the San Gabriel Valley have spilled beyond the original confine of Monterey Park. In many cases, the movement of Chinese to the San Gabriel Valley has gone as far east as Walnut, Rowland Heights, Hacienda Heights, Diamond Bar, even Chino Hills. In most areas, the Chinese have brought huge investments and businesses to these communities, thus revitalizing the local economy. Table 3 shows the Chinese-American population growth in Los Angeles County between 1970 and 1999.

TABLE 3 CHINESE-AMERICAN POPULATION GROWTH IN SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

City Name	1970 Population	1980 Population	1990 Population	1999 Population
<b>West San Gabriel Valley (WSGV)</b>				
Alhambra	327	4,043	21,436	28,437
Arcadia	25	640	7,434	18,041
Monterey Park	2,200	8,082	22,232	24,758
Pasadena	796	1,694	3,403	110
Rosemead	95	1,326	10,767	15,678
San Gabriel	50	842	8,135	13,376
San Marino	15	486	3,304	5,260
South Pasadena	266	1,351	3,059	3,795
<i>WSGV total</i>	<i>3,774</i>	<i>18,464</i>	<i>79,770</i>	<i>109,455</i>
<b>Central San Gabriel Valley (CSGV)</b>				
El Monte	77	326	6,611	11,972
South El Monte	25	71	488	924
<i>CSGV total</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>7,099</i>	<i>12,896</i>
<b>East San Gabriel Valley (ESGV)</b>				
Diamond Bar	-	403	3,827	10,091
Hacienda Heights	-	1,597	8,219	11,921
The City of Industry	-	n.a.	-	11
Rowland Heights	27	604	4,704	14,057
Walnut	24	256	3,522	8,590
West Covina	117	1,175	5,148	7,612
<i>ESGV total</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>4,035</i>	<i>25,420</i>	<i>52,282</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,044</b>	<b>22,896</b>	<b>112,289</b>	<b>174,633</b>

Source: Li, W., Dymski, G., Zhou, Y., Chee, M. and Aldana, C. (2002). Chinese-American Banking and Community Development in Los Angeles County. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92(4)  
Table 4 lists the San Gabriel Valley cities with the highest percentages of Chinese Americans in 2000.

TABLE 4 LIST OF CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE AMERICANS IN SAN GABRIEL VALLEY IN 2000

City	Percentage of Chinese Americans
Monterey Park	41.2%
San Marino	40.6%
Arcadia	34.0%
San Gabriel	33.6%
Alhambra	33.1%
Rosemead	29.3%
Rowland Heights	29.0%
Walnut	28.6%
Temple City	27.9%
Hacienda Heights	22.4%
Diamond Bar	17.9%
El Monte	10.3%

Source: Li, W. (1999). Building Ethnoburbia: The Emergence and Manifestation of the Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles' San Gabriel Valley. *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2.1: 1-28.

The neighboring City of Alhambra was 33.1% Chinese in 2000. Significant also is the higher proportion of Taiwanese in this area compared with other sections. To a certain extent, a Taiwanese society has been transplanted here. Mandarin has become the common Chinese language in the San Gabriel Valley, and immigrants are able to live and work comfortably in this area without speaking or understanding English. San Gabriel and Rosemead also have a very high percentage of Asian American population, especially Chinese American population (Allen and Turner, 1997).

Some of the wealthiest Chinese bought homes in San Marino, a small city that had long been a prestigious symbol of the gracious living for the white elites. White residents were shocked to find that immigrants could afford the beautiful homes of this city. In 2000, more than 40% of San Marino's population was Chinese.

Other affluent Chinese moved into newer suburban developments in the eastern San Gabriel Valley, in places like Rowland Heights, Walnut, Diamond Bar, or even as far as Chino Hills. In response to the shopping and service needs of Chinese in these areas, a many Chinese businesses have located together along a mile-long stretch of Colima Road in Rowland Heights and Industry (parallel to the 60

Freeway). In the north-south direction, Nogales, Fullerton, and Azusa Boulevards are experiencing severe traffic congestion every day due to the booming local economy (Allen and Turner, 1997).

All these residents make the eastern San Gabriel Valley the largest center of affluent Chinese in Southern California. Yet they are not isolated from a Chinese-oriented life, for they can find whatever goods and services they need right there. They feel no need to visit Chinatown any longer.

#### **4.4 Summary of Factors Affecting San Gabriel Valley “Ethnoburb” Formation**

The formation of the Chinese “ethnoburb” in the San Gabriel Valley may be attributed to the following factors:

- The post-World War II urban development in the U.S. was characterized by the suburbanization movement. The post-1965 Chinese immigration was no exception;
- The more recent Chinese immigrants have a higher educational attainment and English literacy than the old Chinese immigrants living in Chinatown. Because of this reason, the distribution of the Chinese Americans is more decentralized on a macro scale. However, due to social and cultural reasons, the distribution of the Chinese Americans is still concentrated on a micro scale. For example, the San Gabriel Valley has the following scattered Chinese communities: West San Gabriel Valley, Arcadia/San Marino, and East San Gabriel. However, along Valley Boulevard, Colima Boulevard, and Atlantic Boulevard, the Chinese business facilities are highly concentrated;
- The more recent Chinese immigrants have a higher socioeconomic status than their predecessors. Many people invested their money in business, rather than serving as laborers. Chen (1992) delineated a class structure of new Chinese immigrants: capitalist class; new middle class; small business class; and working class. Overall, these people are much richer than their predecessors. They can directly settle in the suburban regions, bypassing Chinatown;
- The Chinese American suburbanization process has been shaped by globalization, internationalization, and the more favorable U.S. immigration policies after 1965; and
- The Chinese American suburbanization process has benefited from the emergence of modern transportation and telecommunication technologies. For example, a near universal auto ownership of the Chinese Americans living in the San Gabriel Valley makes them less

reliant on Chinatown. Additionally, many Chinese Americans in the San Gabriel Valley have cellular phones, which greatly facilitate their personal and business interactions.

### 5. Comparison of Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley Developments

Table 5 compares Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley.

TABLE 5 COMPARISON OF CHINATOWN AND SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

Category	Chinatown (Old Ethnic Enclave)	San Gabriel Valley (New Ethnoburb)
Origins of Chinese Immigrants	Canton of South China and Southeast Asia	Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China
Initial time of immigration	19 <sup>th</sup> century, with a much older age structure and longer duration of residence	1960s, a much younger age structure and shorter duration of residence
Major spoken language	Cantonese, linguistically isolated	Mandarin, partially assimilated
English literacy	Low	Medium to high
Income level	Low	Medium to high
Economic base	Trade, manufacturing, restaurants, and other traditional service industries	Ethnic economic niches plus highly technological and professional enterprises.
Form of business	Small, simple and low-wage enterprise	International investment and moderately sized enterprise
Spatial concentration	Highly concentrated, more self-contained ethnic enclave	Moderately concentrated to spatially dispersed multiethnic community
Urban environment	High density, high housing costs, and low housing availability	Affordable housing, good school district, and good suburban environment
Interethnic relations	More isolated, less interactions with other ethnic groups	More harmonious with other ethnic groups, and a relatively high local political participation
Reliance on public service	Rely on public welfare and transit service	Less rely on public welfare and have an almost universal auto ownership

Source: Li, W. (1997) Spatial Transformation of an Urban Ethnic community from Chinatown to Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation. University of Southern California.

It is worth noting that the post-1980 globalization trend has profoundly shaped Asian immigration, assimilation and development in the San Gabriel Valley. The San Gabriel Valley Chinese community was created under global, national and local contexts, and has stronger global connections and internal stratifications. This area also has superior English language skills than their Chinatown counterparts, which are in turn reflected in income levels, occupational structures and housing conditions. The new Asian American communities in the San Gabriel Valley exhibited different characteristics from the conventional ethnic enclave such as Chinatown.

While the downtown Chinatown continues existing, the suburban areas in the San Gabriel Valley have emerged, characterized by high concentrations of Chinese population, strong contrasts in socio-economic status, expanding Chinese-owned businesses and industrial districts, and a relatively high level of Chinese participation in local politics.

## 6. Urban Development Patterns of Mainstream Society and Ethnic Population

This section highlights the similarities and differences of urban development patterns between mainstream society (i.e., white Americans) and ethnic population (Chinese Americans in this case). This comparison will put the Chinese urban development pattern in the perspective of a broader American society.

### 6.1 Similarities

First, both mainstream society and ethnic population have undergone urbanization and suburbanization processes. As a result of suburbanization, central business district of the mainstream society and Chinatown of the ethnic population all become relatively declined.

Second, the timings of urbanization and suburbanization for both mainstream society and ethnic Chinese population were pretty close. For the mainstream society, urbanization mainly occurred during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its suburbanization accelerated after World War II. For the ethnic Chinese population, its suburbanization also started during the 1960s and 1970s.

Third, socioeconomic and technological factors have important influences on both white Americans and Chinese Americans. With the advancement of transportation and telecommunication technologies, white Americans and Chinese Americans are geographically getting more dispersed, rather than clustering in downtown areas. Most of Chinese Americans are working in the service sector, which is similar to white Americans.

## 6.2 Differences

In spite of these similarities, the urban development patterns of mainstream society and ethnic population also have shown major differences.

First, the urbanization of the mainstream society was largely attributable to agglomeration economies free of racial and ethnic discriminations. But, the ethnic Chinese population's early concentration in Chinatown ghetto was forced due to discriminatory treatments, legal status restrictions, and linguistic barriers.

Second, historically white Americans had gone through the so-called "white flight" process due to their antagonistic relations with African Americans. When African Americans moved into the central city, white Americans moved out to the outskirts. The Chinese American suburbanization was mainly due to Chinatown's overcrowding, more favorable immigration policies after the 1960s, transportation/telecommunication technological advancements, and socioeconomic condition improvements.

Third, while white American population growth is mainly due to natural increase right now, the Chinese American population growth in Los Angeles is being significantly influenced by immigration from China, Taiwan, and other Asian countries. With the emergence of China as an economic power, the composition and socioeconomic status of local Chinese Americans are constantly changing.

## 7. Implications on Urban Management

In the future, more and more Chinese Americans will be living in Los Angeles County. This has important implications on local urban management.

First of all, more Chinese Americans have participated in Los Angeles politics and will become even more politically powerful in the years to come. The City of Los Angeles used to only have one Chinese American city council member (Mike Woo) in the 1980s and early 1990s. At present, many San Gabriel Valley Cities have Chinese American mayors, city council members, and board members. The Chinese community has its representatives serving on the state legislature and will be represented in the U.S. Congress very soon. It is worth noting that even some of the most important political figures in the County, such as County Supervisor, County Sheriff, U.S. Representative, are related to the Chinese community through interracial marriages. All of these are indicators that Chinese Americans will play a more important role in local urban politics and management.

Second, even though English remains as a lingua franca in Los Angeles County, bilingual education in both English and Chinese is becoming very urgent, especially in the Chinese community. Many local government notices and forms have been published in both English and Chinese in San Gabriel Valley. This trend will gradually be spreading to other parts of the county.

Third, the urban landscapes in Los Angeles have been profoundly shaped by Chinese immigration. Chinese restaurants, Buddhist temples, cultural and entertainment facilities are widely available in Los Angeles.

Fourth, due to the presence of a large number of Chinese immigrants, the socioeconomic and cultural ties between Los Angeles and Chinese cities have been strengthened. For example, Los Angeles and Guangzhou have established their sister-city relationship. Hundreds of Chinese delegations visit Los Angeles each year. Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have become the most important gateways to America, importing and exporting billions of dollars worth of goods to and from China.

## 8. Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The Chinese immigrants have settled in the Los Angeles region for more than 150 years. The past 150 years can be divided into two time periods: the pre-1965 time period, and the post-1965 time period, with the enactment of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 as the boundary line. The pre-1965 Chinese immigrants were primarily clustered in the old and new Chinatown area, which is a typical ethnic enclave. While the new Chinatown continues to exist today, the post-1965 Chinese immigrants began to be suburbanized, primarily moving to the San Gabriel Valley. Therefore, the Chinese immigrants have also undergone an early urbanization and a later suburbanization process, which is seemingly very similar to the traditional urban development process.

The Chinese urban development experience in Los Angeles County suggests that the ethnic population urban development process has profoundly been shaped by political, economic, social/cultural, and technological factors, which bears little resemblance to that of the mainstream society. Compared to the other ethnic groups in Los Angeles County, the Chinese Americans are relatively wealthier and have a higher educational attainment. However, the Chinese Americans are still facing many obstacles, for example, inter-ethnic tensions, intra-ethnic conflicts, income polarization, social/linguistic barriers, low political participation, social prejudice, and others. The Chinese Americans in Los Angeles County will continue to be partially assimilated and partially segregated, in spite of the prevailing suburbanization movement.



Nevertheless, the presence of a large Chinese community in Los Angeles has important implications on local urban management in political, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects. In managing a large, multi-ethnic metropolitan area, aside from the main stream society, it is essential to take ethnic population groups into account. They can never be ignored.

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