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What's In A Neighborhood's Name?

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Officials in Los Angeles have renamed the former "South Central" to remove the stigma of riots in the 1990's. But some business owners and residents say that's had a greater negative consequence than keeping the old name would have.

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"Five years ago, the city expunged the name 'South Central' from its maps and replaced it with the more general 'South Los Angeles.' The change was meant to erase the stigma of riots and blight that marred an area south of the 10 Freeway and along Central Avenue, a place renowned in the 1940s for its thriving black culture -- restaurants, jazz clubs and businesses.

But an unintended consequence was to make core neighborhoods around Central Avenue disappear from Angelenos' mental map -- arguably none so much as Newton, a patch of nowhere east of the Harbor Freeway.

'Namelessness matters,' said Josh Sides, professor of California history at Cal State Northridge. 'A nameless place doesn't exist. . . . Speculators, developers, want to invest in a place that exists.'

Government workers say it is more difficult to organize people who aren't unified by a geographic name. Advocates say lack of identity makes it more difficult to attract resources and develop services. A developer said it's one reason this area is a kind of last frontier for new construction."

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 07, 2008

Full Story: [Without a name, former 'South Central' L.A. has become almost invisible](#)