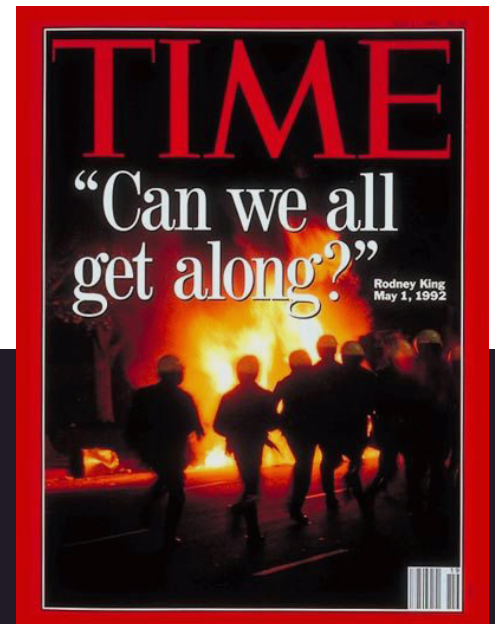


April 27, 2017



# 1992 Revisited

## Divergent Paths

Paul Ong, Alycia Cheng, Chhandara Pech, Silvia R. Gonzalez

**“The fire, destruction, paranoia, hatred, and looting are serious and unfortunate issues that...blinded us all.”**

*An Kim, June 1992  
Korea Times*

### Study Area



### Damage

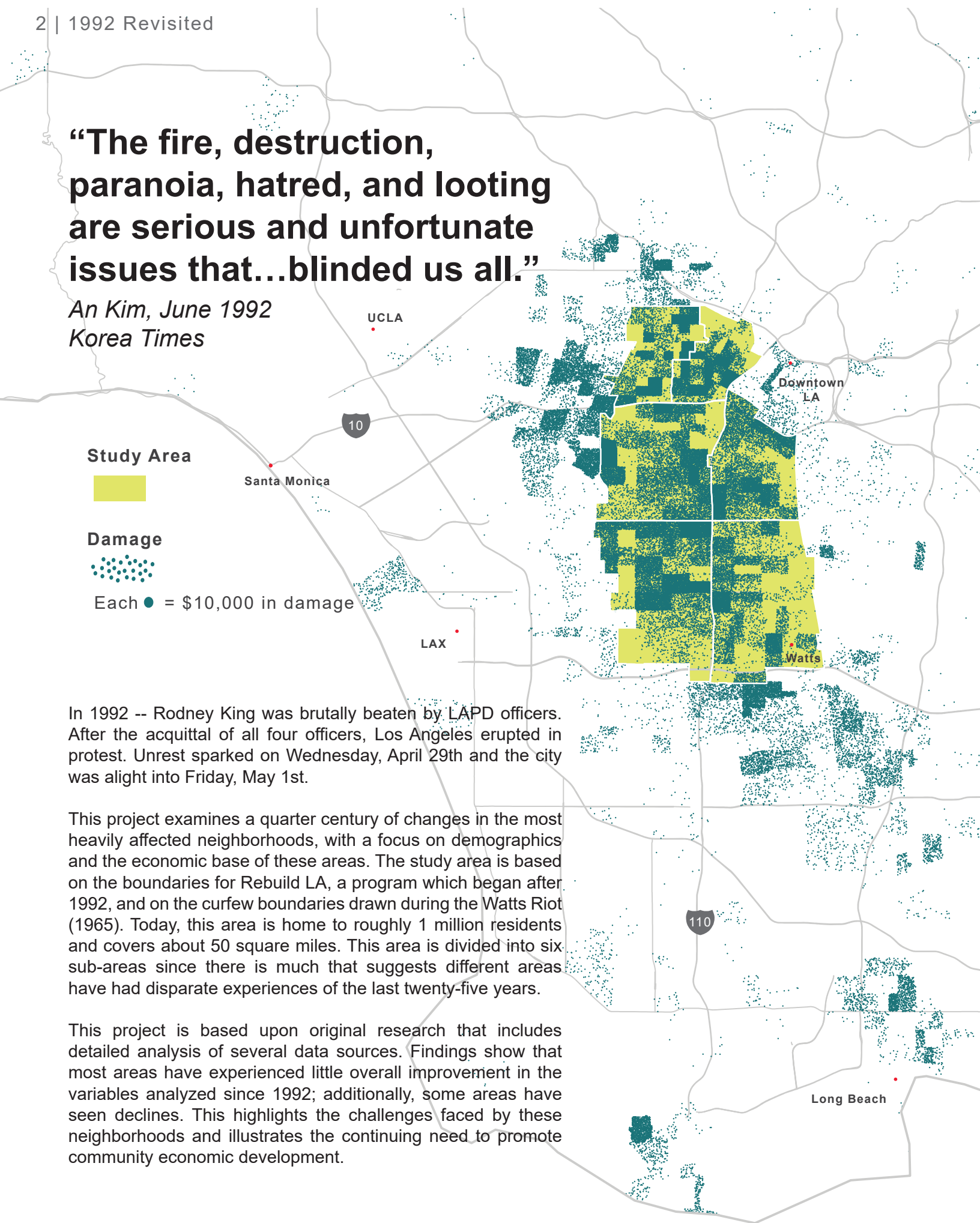


Each ● = \$10,000 in damage

In 1992 -- Rodney King was brutally beaten by LAPD officers. After the acquittal of all four officers, Los Angeles erupted in protest. Unrest sparked on Wednesday, April 29th and the city was alight into Friday, May 1st.

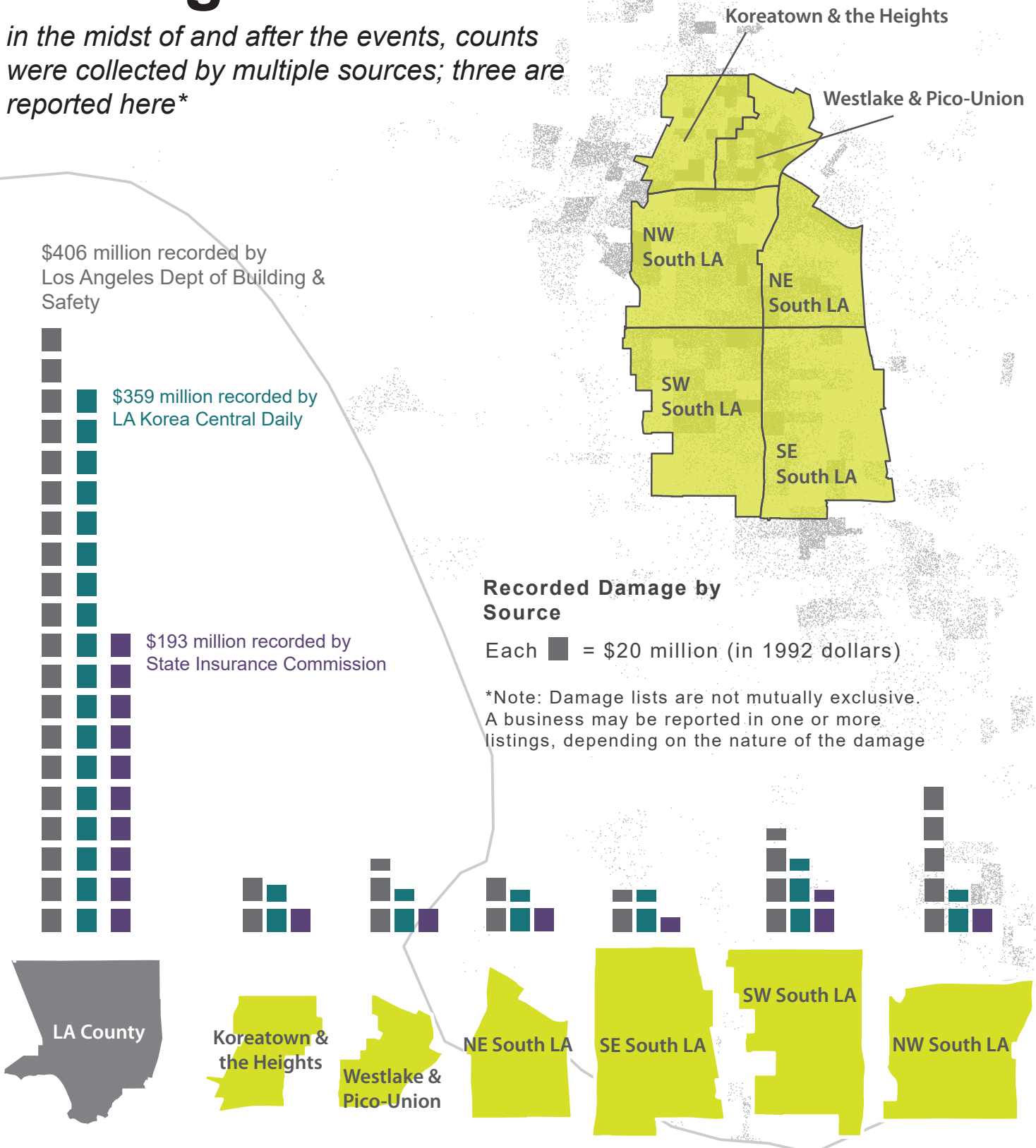
This project examines a quarter century of changes in the most heavily affected neighborhoods, with a focus on demographics and the economic base of these areas. The study area is based on the boundaries for Rebuild LA, a program which began after 1992, and on the curfew boundaries drawn during the Watts Riot (1965). Today, this area is home to roughly 1 million residents and covers about 50 square miles. This area is divided into six sub-areas since there is much that suggests different areas have had disparate experiences of the last twenty-five years.

This project is based upon original research that includes detailed analysis of several data sources. Findings show that most areas have experienced little overall improvement in the variables analyzed since 1992; additionally, some areas have seen declines. This highlights the challenges faced by these neighborhoods and illustrates the continuing need to promote community economic development.



# Counting Damage in Neighborhoods

*in the midst of and after the events, counts were collected by multiple sources; three are reported here\**



# Tracing Change

*areas have seen ethnoracial shifts over the past 25 years*

In 1992, most of South LA was predominantly black, with a high Hispanic population in the northeast and in the neighborhoods of Westlake/Pico-Union.

Today, a quarter century later, this area has seen a shift. The neighborhoods of South LA are now home to higher proportions of a growing Hispanic population.

## WITHIN STUDY AREA

**37% Black in 1990**

**→ 21% in 2015**

**53% Hispanic in 1990**

**→ 65% in 2015**



Black



Hispanic



All Other Ethnicities/Races

**1990**

**2015**

**Mapping:** Categories are constructed based on race and gradations come from determining the majority group for each tract. The darkest shade represents a tract where the racial group holds a 75% majority or more. Where no majority exists, the lightest shade shows the group holding a plurality.



# Tracing Change

## *socioeconomic status of residents*

Before 1992, these areas included some of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of LA. Discontentment and frustration at institutions that had left these areas behind or were hostile to the existence of these communities reached the highest boiling point here.

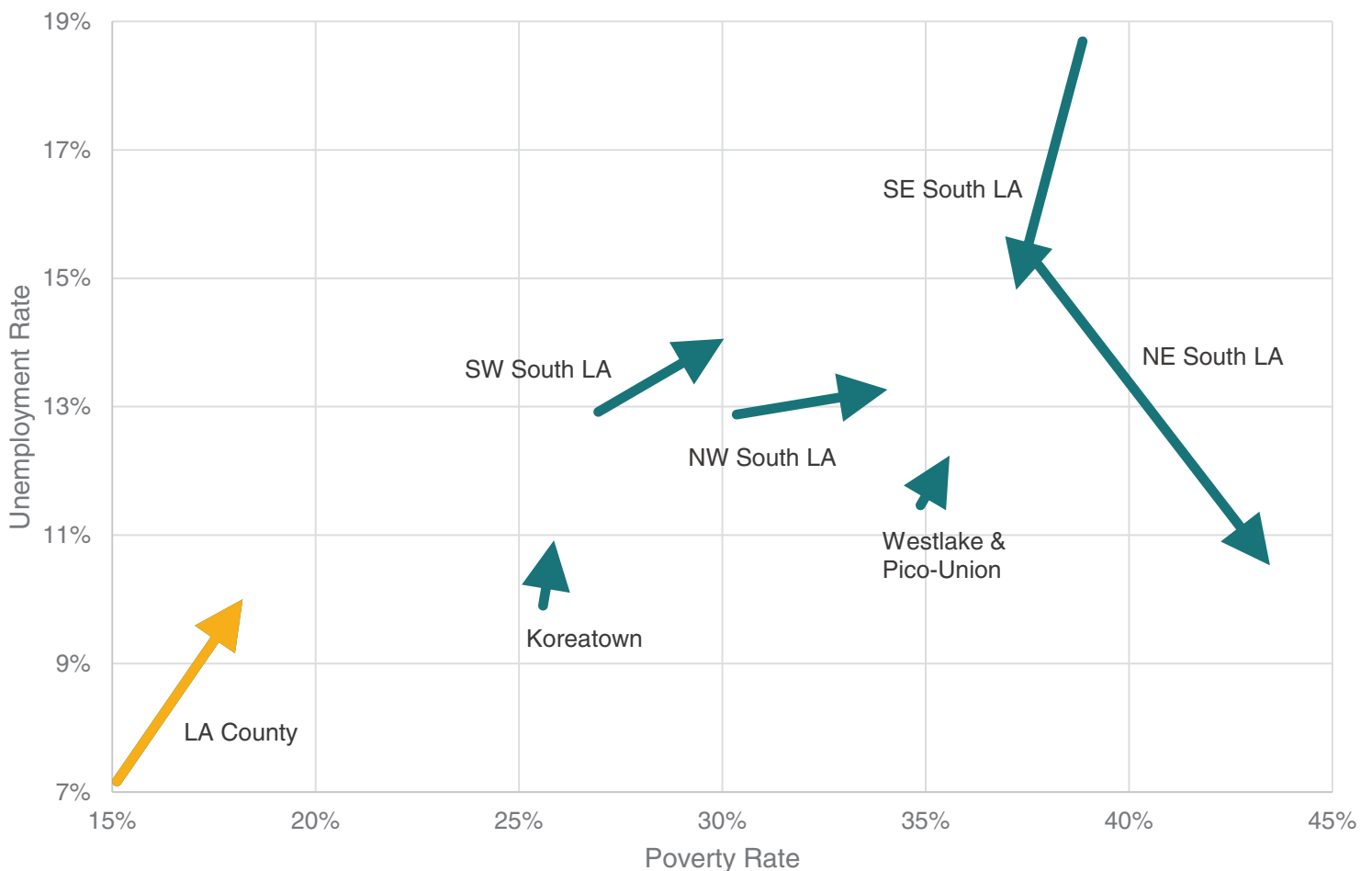
Twenty-five years ago these areas had higher unemployment and poverty rates than the County. These rates for some neighborhoods have not changed since 1990, while others reflect some of the larger County trends of rising unemployment and poverty, the lingering effects of recession. Eastern parts of South LA, however, have seen drops in unemployment since 1990.

Downward arrow indicates an improvement among residents (lower unemployment and lower poverty rates)



Upward arrow indicates a worsening of socioeconomic status among residents

1990-2015 Socioeconomic Trajectory of Residents

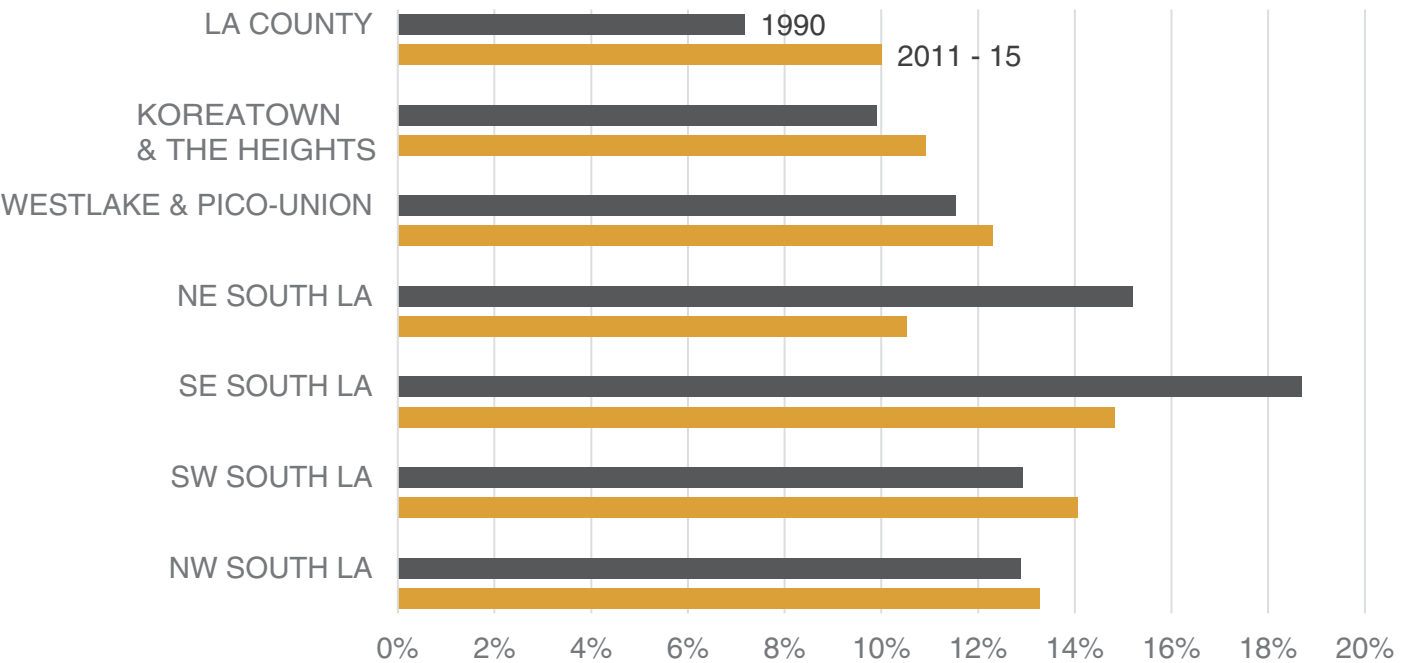


# SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF RESIDENTS

Poverty Rate



Unemployment Rate



# Tracing Change

## *economic base of neighborhood*

In 1990, all six areas had lower per capita sales compared to the County as a whole. This is also true today, which may be the result of having fewer larger retailers in the area. With respect to jobs, the story is more complex. The Jobs-to-Workers Ratio measures the relative number of employment opportunities per worker. Some areas began with a higher ratio than LA County, but overtime the numbers have indicated different trajectories.

These trends point to some of the challenges faced by these neighborhoods. However, it is important to note that these quantitative data are limited in what they are able to capture. For many, the events of 1992 served as a catalyst for greater engagement, organization, and mobilization. The quantitative data here do not fully capture the strength and nature of these activities.

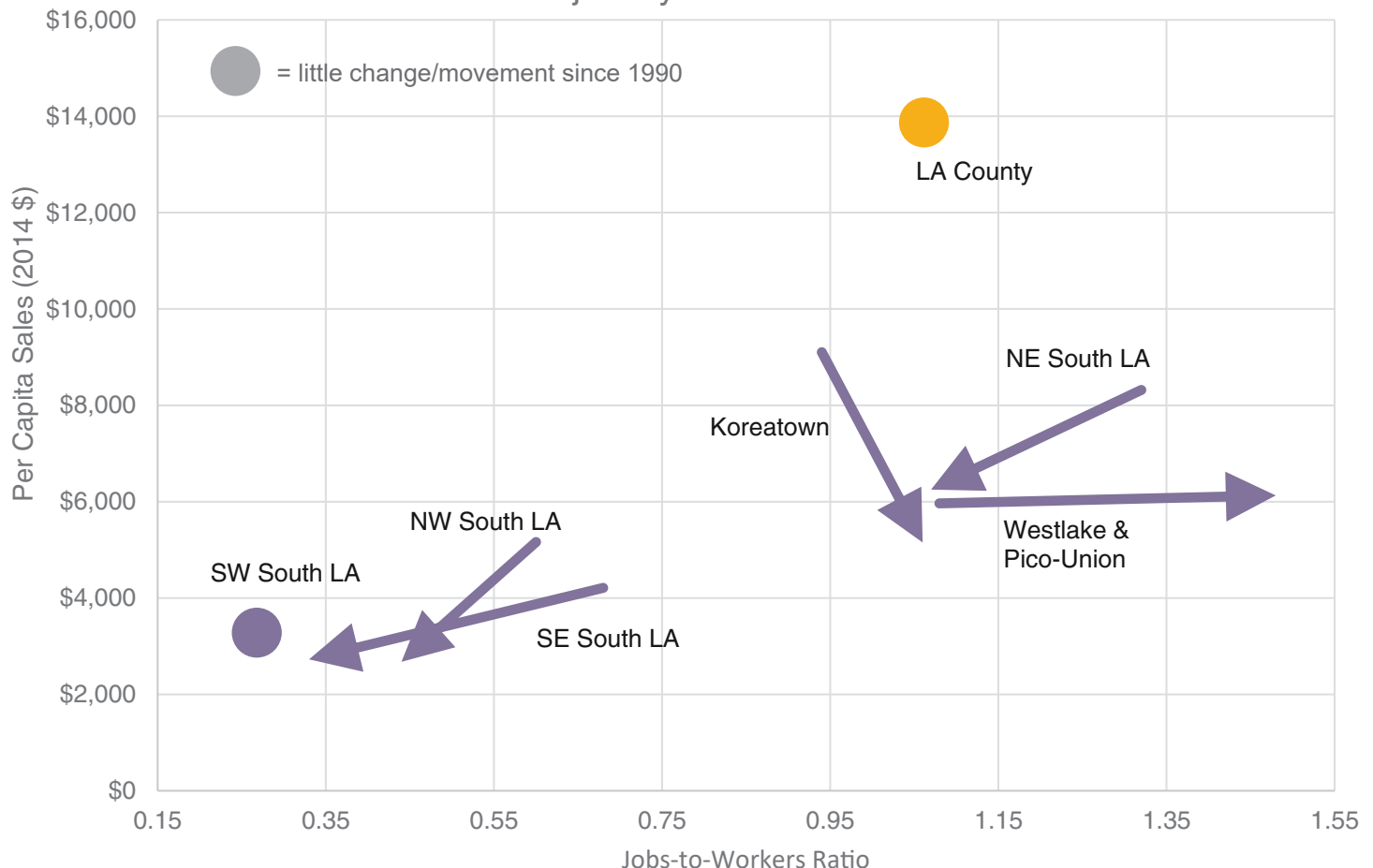
Downward arrow indicates a drop in the economic base

**Worse**

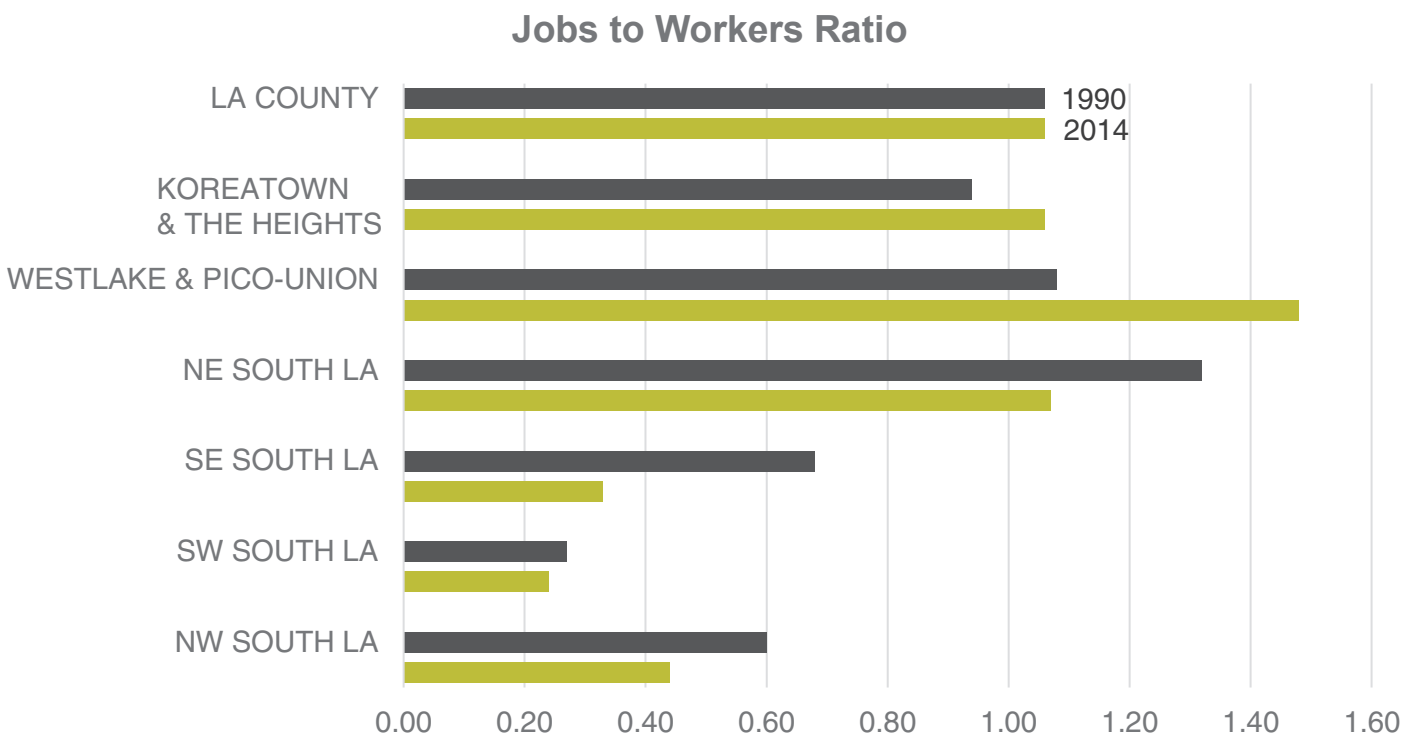
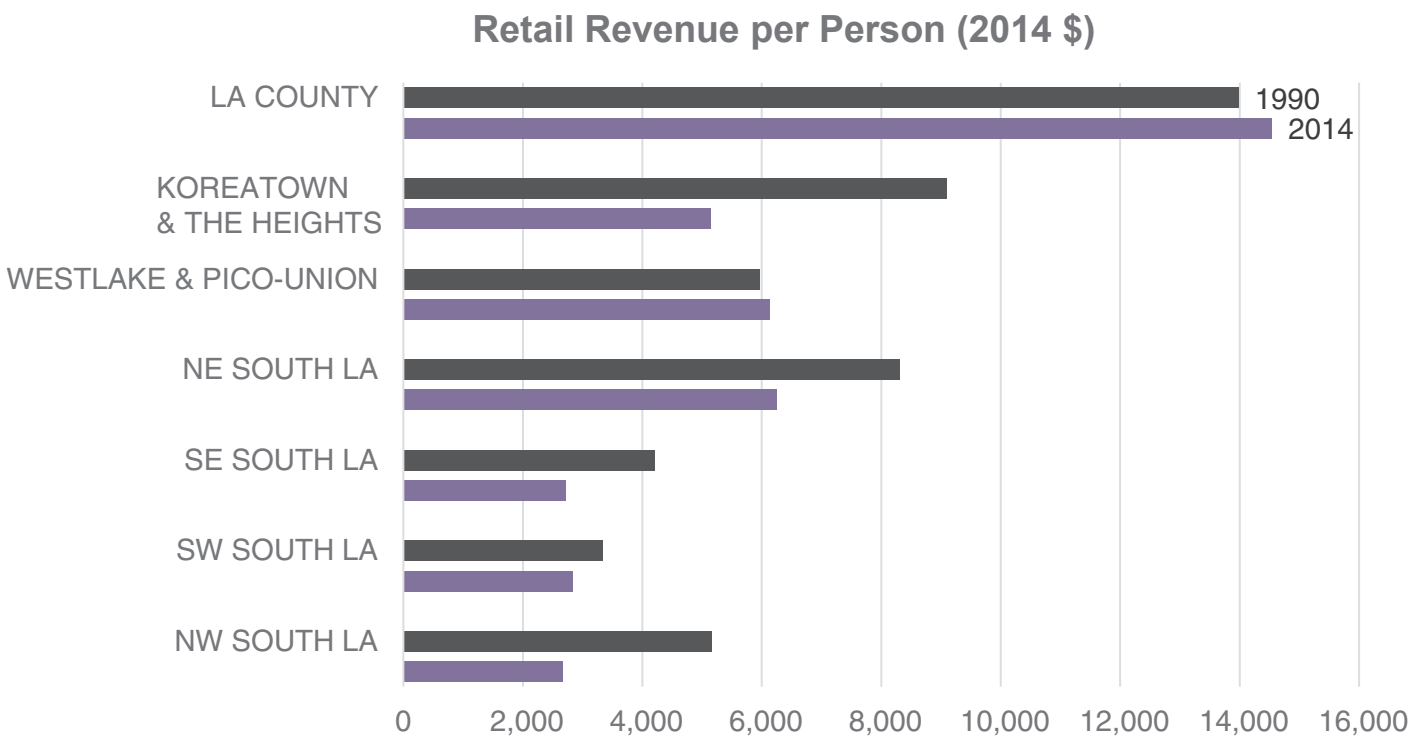
**Better**

Upward arrow indicates an increase in unemployment and poverty

1990-2014 Trajectory of Economic Base



# ECONOMIC BASE OF NEIGHBORHOODS





# Reflecting on 1992

## *lessons for today*

Improving the lives of those in the most affected areas has been elusive in the face of growing income and wealth inequality, and gentrification driven displacement. The research in this brief and others conducted at UCLA show a critical need to renew a commitment to bending the trajectory of economic development towards justice, to embrace inclusive people and place strategies.

**Paul Ong, Director**  
**UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge**

...non-profit organizations located in South Los Angeles have made a huge difference in not only highlighting deficiencies in education, job training and healthcare; but [also in] working to remedy these problems. [Moreover] young people from South Los Angeles are more committed than ever to rebuild 'better,' from the bottom up.

**Linda Griego, CEO and President**  
**Rebuild LA, 1994-97**

Even with billions of dollars of investments, progress has been frustratingly sluggish, partly because of the Great Recession, but now, South LA is attracting major economic development projects, [and projects] such as the Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Line, Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Center; NFL Rams and Chargers stadium, Los Angeles Football Club Soccer stadium and the Lucas Museum should have meaningful economic and community benefit.

**Mark Ridley-Thomas, Supervisor, Second District**  
**Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors**

Much more still needs to be done...Some things have changed since 1992, but honest assessment will note negative conditions still overshadow the many positive efforts for positive change, especially in South Central Los Angeles where basic change remains more rhetoric than reality.

**Larry Aubry, Columnist**  
**Los Angeles Sentinel, April 5, 2017**

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**Variables:**

**Ethnoracial Categories:** The relative size of the population defined by race and Hispanic origins. For this report, three categories are used to represent the dominant groups – non-Hispanic African Americans, Hispanics regardless of race, and a residual other category.

**Poverty Rate:** The percent of the population with income below the official Federal Poverty Level, which is adjusted based on family size, and adjusted by the inflation factor over time.

**Unemployment Rate:** The number of unemployed individuals actively seeking work divided by the labor force. High rates indicate difficulties in finding employment.

**Per Capita Sales:** Total retailing revenues (in 2014 dollars) divided by total population, used to measure the relative level of retailing activity for a given geographic area.

**Sources:**

**Damages:** State of California Insurance Commission, City of L.A. Department of Building and Safety, and the Korea Central Daily

**Ethnoracial Composition:** 1990 Decennial Census and 2011-15 5-year American Community Survey (ACS)

**Socioeconomic Status:** 1990 Decennial Census and 2011-15 5-year ACS

**Employment Base:** 1990 Census Transportation Planning Package and 2014 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

**Retail:** 1990 and 2014 NETS/Dun & Bradstreet

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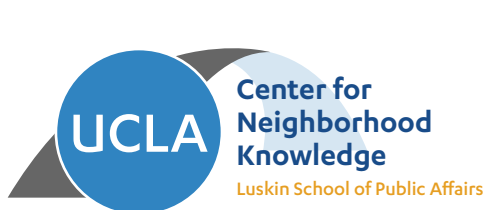
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