

# COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCILS AS A WAY TO SATISFY THE TIEBOUTIAN DRIVE FOR LOCAL CONTROL\*

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## INTRODUCTION

TIEBOUT'S (1956) MODEL OF "VOTING WITH ONE'S feet" offers a longstanding theoretical basis for the desirability of having many local governments in a metropolitan area to provide the different local revenue and expenditure mixes desired by the variety of citizens that usually exist in such areas. But even Tiebout (p. 423) noted that a simple application of his model ignores the "...obvious external economies and diseconomies between communities." Oates (1972) recognized this and expanded upon Tiebout's initial theory to offer his own thinking of what determines the optimal number of jurisdictions for a given population. The Oates' model of optimal government size is based upon trading off the satisfaction gained by more residents when more local governments are created for them; against the greater spatial externalities, loss in economies of scale, and increased administrative and compliance costs that arise with greater local governance per capita. Fisher (2007, Part 2) offers an excellent summary of this strand of the local public finance literature. In a session titled "Theory and Practice of Public Finance" at this conference, Oates described a "Second Wave of Fiscal Federalism" that seeks institutions that realize the gains of fiscal decentralization, without "perverse" outcomes such as the "raiding of the fiscal commons." The topic of study in this paper is in fact an example of one of these second-wave institutions.

This paper draws upon these longstanding theoretical models of local public finance and sub-national government structure to better understand and analyze the current movement in Sacramento County, California for greater local governance. Sacramento County is a primarily urban county of nearly 1,000 square miles and one and a quarter million residents (1,252 population density). In 2006 it was the 25<sup>th</sup> most populated county in the United States, but as shown in Figure 1 it has only six incorporated cities. For comparison sake, the two most populated counties in the United

States after Sacramento County (excluding Bronx County, NY which is a borough of NYC) are Nassau County, NY and Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Respectively, in 2002 the United States Census of Governments listed them as containing 66 and 57 incorporated cities – or about 10 times the number of cities in Sacramento County.

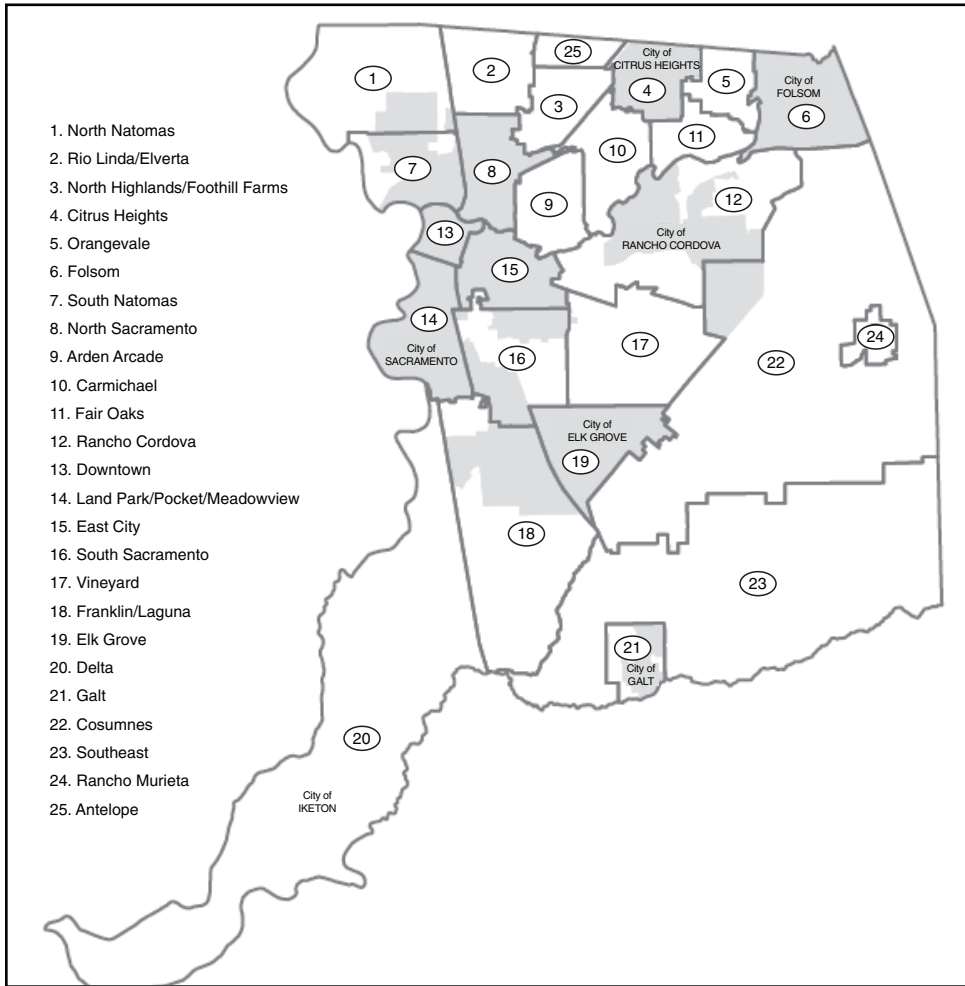
Over half of Sacramento County's population resides in its unincorporated portion. Given the relatively recent incorporation of three new Sacramento County cities – Citrus Heights in 1997, Elk Grove in 2000, and Rancho Cordova in 2003 – and the formation of other citizen-based committees to study the feasibility of further incorporations, there exist strong Tiebout-motivated feelings regarding the desirability of creating new locally controlled jurisdictions. The region's newspaper, the *Sacramento Bee* has taken to regularly calling the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County the "Uncity" and in a 2003 editorial stated that the "urbanized county needs to become a city."<sup>1</sup>

Citing arguments straight out of Oates' theory on optimal local government structure, officials in Sacramento County believe that new incorporations are not socially optimal and in July of 2005 instituted Community Planning Councils (CPCs) in neighborhoods where the drive to incorporate has been the greatest: Rio Linda/Elverta, Arden Arcade, Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks (respectively labeled as 2, 9, 10, and 11 in Figure 1). County officials hope that these locally controlled councils will satisfy the desire of some residents for greater self determination. As described at the County of Sacramento (2008) Web site:

Quality of life issues are at the core of [Sacramento] County's recent efforts to improve service delivery to neighborhoods... From temporary fruit and vegetable stands to new condominium complexes, these are the type of quality of life decisions historically made by a centralized planning commission and/or zoning administrator. By consolidating these and many other decisions to the local level through Community Planning Councils, the County returns control to the people who live and work in the community.

\*I have incorporated the helpful comments that Pavel Yakovlev offered for an earlier draft.

Figure 1: 2007 Cities (Shaded) and Communities (Outlined) in Sacramento County, CA



By shifting some decision making to the local level, the County hopes to keep its unincorporated portion intact, preserve its ability to take advantage of scale economies, and to redistribute resources across the entire County.

Previously described in Wassmer (2002), the existing desire for further local control through incorporation is greater in California than in other states for at least three reasons. The first is existing pent-up demand for more local government in the State’s metropolitan areas. Empirical models developed in Fisher and Wassmer (1998), and Wassmer and Fisher (2000), demonstrate that

California’s metropolitan areas have fewer cities than political and economic theory would predict. A second reason for increased pressure to form new cities is California’s high rate of population growth where the newcomers are socio-economically different from existing residents. As Tiebout’s model predicts, population growth through a more diverse population is a prime breeding ground for the desire for greater local governance. Finally, the post-Proposition 13 institutional environment that surrounds subnational fiscal relations in the state has led to “revenue-starved” communities that often look to incorporation to retain locally

*Figure 2:* Location of Sacramento County in California

generated sales tax revenues that would otherwise be distributed throughout a county.

As proof of these Tieboutian desires, note the following statements drawn directly from the Web site of a citizen-based committee for the incorporation of the Arden Arcade (2008) neighborhood in Sacramento County:

Local control will allow Arden Arcade residents and business to identify and implement priorities for action, such as improved police service, building code enforcement, an economic action plan, and a clean, safe environment, all focused on Arden Arcade. ...For Arden Arcade, the initial fiscal analysis, completed in May 2005, reported that ...about 40% of the tax revenues generated in Arden Arcade are used by the County elsewhere.

Sacramento County's four Community Planning Councils have final decision-making authority on local issues. This largely consists of use permits for things like guest houses in residential zones, drive-up windows, private schools, and automobile auctions. Eventually, the authority will expand to stop signs, sidewalks, and parking zones. Though not officially acknowledged, a persistent rumor in the County is that if citizens are found to favor the use of these locally controlled councils for land

use decisions, their decision-making power may be extended to other county-provided services whose funding could be supplemented with local revenue sources.

Although not a county, an analogous situation has recently occurred in the City of Los Angeles following the unsuccessful San Fernando Valley vote on secession and incorporation. In 1999, residents amended the City's Charter to allow for the creation of a citywide system of Neighborhood Councils (NCs). As described in Musso et al. (2005), in that year nearly 90 percent of the City's population resided in the boundaries of one of the 86 established councils. Governed by a locally elected body, Los Angeles' NCs are designed to help promote greater citizen participation in government and making city government more responsive to local needs. However, the City only provides \$50,000 in annual funding to each NC to do this. Musso, Weare, and Cooper (2004) have completed a survey of participant opinion on these NCs.

The analysis offered here is an empirical test of the degree that Sacramento County's Community Planning Councils, after a year and a half of operation, have worked toward improving the local quality of life, public services, and/or land use decisions in the four communities they oper-

ate in. The remainder of this paper describes the research methods used to do this and the results of these methods applied to the first of two planned surveys of citizens of the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County. This paper should be informative to academics, practitioners, and policy makers interested in knowing the efficacy of one method (CPCs) of satisfying citizen desire for greater local control, that at the same time preserves the scale economies of a larger overlying government. The remainder of the paper includes a description of the research method, results, and conclusions.

### METHOD

In July of 2006, Sacramento County's Department of Neighborhood Services commissioned a telephone survey of 1400 residents living in the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County (250 from each of the four Community Planning Council areas and 400 from the unincorporated area of county not in a CPC) that was designed to gather information on political/community awareness, satisfaction with quality of life and local services, experience with CPCs, and support for the concept of more localized planning. In December of 2007 a second survey will be completed. These surveys are designed to provide the raw data necessary to determine whether the implementation of each CPC has achieved its desired goals of improving the quality of life, public services, and/or local land use decisions made within the community they operate in. I next describe the research methods designed to utilize the survey results and the results of the application of these methods to the first of the two surveys.

Four questions in the July of 2006 survey of Sacramento County residents form the basis of five regression analyses of what determines a person's opinion on the overall quality of life in their neighborhood, the county's delivery of public services in their neighborhood, land use decisions made in their community, and whether they "support" or "strongly support" local land use decisions being made at the community rather than county level. Regression analysis is used to determine how the independent influences of (1) living in one of the four pilot areas and (2) knowledge of the existence of CPCs affects one's opinion on the issues. A baseline influence is meant to be established in this first set of regressions. A second set of regressions, after December 2007, will then be used to check if this baseline influence has changed.<sup>2</sup>

The five dependent variables used in this study are measures of: (1) Quality of Life, (2) Quality of County Services, (3) Quality of Land Use Decisions, (4) Strong Support for Community Land Use Decisions, and (5) Any Support for Community Land Use Decisions. The general factors expected to influence differences in how people feel about these dependent variables are: (A) Residence in CPC, (B) District Controls, (C) Political Activism, (D) Political Knowledge, (E) Political Opinion, (F) Community Connection, and (G) Socio-Economic Controls. Table 1 contains the explanatory variables, crafted from specific survey questions, which represent each of these general factors in the regression analysis. Table 1 also lists how each of the dependent and explanatory measures is coded. Most are dummy variables that take on a value of one if a condition is satisfied and a value of zero if it is not. The dependent variables representing resident's opinion on quality of life, quality of services, and quality of land use decisions are coded from one to five, with one representing the lowest level appraisal and five the highest.

Tables 2 and 3 list the descriptive statistics for all variables. In these tables, the second column contains the number of valid observations for each variable. Some are less than the 1400 surveyed because of a refusal to answer, or not knowing the answer to a survey question that was the basis of the variable. The minimum and maximum value observations, the mean, and the standard deviation for each variable are also listed.

### FINDINGS

The second column of Table 4 lists the results of the first regression analysis in which variation in individual assessment of the neighborhood's quality of life is explained by the variables listed in column (1) of the table. While columns (3) and (4) in Table 4 list the results of similar regressions analyses that respectively use individual opinion on quality of local service and quality of land use decisions. All three of these regressions use ordinary least squares (OLS).<sup>3</sup> The first number in a cell corresponding to a given dependent variable and explanatory variable is the calculated regression coefficient. Below this number, in parenthesis, is the regression coefficient's standard error. A regression coefficient represents the expected influence of an explanatory variable on the dependent variable if the explanatory variable changes by one

*Table 1*  
**Description of Variables Used and Survey Question Derived From**

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Dependent Variables</i>	
Quality of Life	Rate Overall Quality of Life in Your Neighborhood 1=Less than Fair, 2 = Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent
Quality of County Services	Rate County's Overall Delivery of Public Works Services 1=Less than Fair, 2 = Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent
Quality of Land Use Decisions	Rate Land Use/Development Decisions Made in Community 1=Less than Fair, 2 = Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent
Strong Support Community Land Use Decisions	Strongly Support Local Land Used Decisions Made at Community Rather than Countywide Level 1=Yes, 0=No
Any Support Community Land Use Decisions	Strongly or Moderately Support Local Land Used Decisions Made at Community Rather than Countywide Level 1=Yes, 0=No
<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	
<i>Residence in CPC</i>	
Rio Linda CPC	Live in Rio Linda/Elverta CPC 1=Yes, 0=No
Fair Oaks CPC	Live in Fair Oaks CPC 1=Yes, 0=No
Arden Arcade CPC	Live in Arden-Arcade CPC 1=Yes, 0=No
Carmichael CPC	Live in Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms CPC 1=Yes, 0=No <i>Excluded Comparison Area is Rest of Unincorporated Portion of County</i>
<i>District Controls</i>	
District 1	Live in Supervisor Dickinson's District 1=Yes, 0=No
District 2	Live in Supervisor Collin's/Yee's District 1=Yes, 0=No
District 3	Live in Supervisor Peter's District 1=Yes, 0=No
District 4	Live in Supervisor McGlashan's District 1=Yes, 0=No <i>Excluded Comparison Area is Supervisor Nottoli's District</i>
<i>Political Activism</i>	
Neighborhood Assoc Member	Member of Neighborhood or Homeowner's Association, or Neighborhood Watch 1=Yes, 0=No
Voter	Voted in November 2005 Special Election 1=Yes, 0=No
Active in Community	Consider Self Very Active In Community Issues 1=Yes, 0=No
Not Seen Local Govt Meeting	Not Seen or Attended Any Local Government or Agency Meeting 1=Yes, 0=No

Table 1 (continued)

**Description of Variables Used and Survey Question Derived From**

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Political Knowledge</i>	
Identify Correct Land Use Agent	Aware Correct Reviewing Agency for Community Land Use Permits 1=Yes, 0=No
Heard of CPACs	Heard of Community Planning Advising Councils (CPACs) 1=Yes, 0=No
Heard of CPCs	Heard of Coummnity Planning Councils (CPCs) 1=Yes, 0=No
Identify Correct that Resident of CPC	Correctly Identified Inclusion/Exclusion in CPC 1=Yes, 0=No
<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	
<i>Political Opinion</i>	
Liberal	On Political Issues, Are You Liberal 1=Yes, 0=No
Moderate	On Political Issues, Are You Moderate 1=Yes, 0=No <i>Excluded Comparison Political Opinion is Conservative</i>
<i>Community Connection</i>	
Recent Mover	Lived at Present Address Less Than 2 Years 1=Yes, 0=No
Long-Term Resident	Lived in Sacramento County For More Than 20 Years 1=Yes, 0=No
Renter	Do You Rent Your Current Home 1=Yes, 0=No
<i>Socio-Economic Controls</i>	
African American	My Ethnic/Racial Background is African American 1=Yes, 0=No
Asian American	My Ethnic/Racial Background is Asian American 1=Yes, 0=No
Latino	My Ethnic/Racial Background is Latino 1=Yes, 0=No
Native American	My Ethnic/Racial Background is Native American 1=Yes, 0=No
Other Race/Ecnicity	My Ethnic/Racial Background is "Other" 1=Yes, 0=No <i>Excluded Comparison Ethnic/Racial Background is "Undecided/Don't Know" or "Refused"</i>
Male	I am a Male 1=Yes, 0=No
Age	What is Your Age Actual Age Given
Married	Are you Married 1=Yes, 0=No
Childless	No Children Under the Age of 18 Live in My Household 1=Yes, 0=No
Income Greater \$75K	My Household's Annual Income is Greater than \$75,000 1=Yes, 0=No
Income Less \$30K	My Household's Annual Income is Less than \$30,000 1=Yes, 0=No <i>Excluded Comparison Income Category is Between \$30,000 and \$75,000</i> 1=Yes, 0=No

*Table 2*  
**Dependent Variable Descriptive Statistics**

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Quality of Life	1389	1.00	5.00	3.425	1.027
Quality of County Services	1372	1.00	5.00	3.149	1.030
Quality of Land Use Decisions	1325	1.00	5.00	2.762	1.042
Strong Support Community Land Use Dec	1400	.00	1.00	.440	.497
Any Support Community Land Use Dec	1195	.00	1.00	.871	.333

*Table 3*  
**Explanatory Variable Descriptive Statistics**

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Rio Linda CPC	1400	.00	1.00	.179	.383
Fair Oaks CPC	1400	.00	1.00	.179	.383
Arden Arcade CPC	1400	.00	1.00	.179	.383
Carmichael CPC	1400	.00	1.00	.179	.383
District 1	1400	.00	1.00	.144	.351
District 2	1400	.00	1.00	.144	.352
District 3	1400	.00	1.00	.284	.451
District 4	1400	.00	1.00	.213	.410
Neighborhood Assoc Member Voter	1400	.00	1.00	.289	.453
Active in Community	1400	.00	1.00	.729	.444
Not Seen Local Govt Meeting	1400	.00	1.00	.468	.499
Identify Correct Land Use Agent	1400	.00	1.00	.563	.496
Heard of CPACs	1400	.00	1.00	.209	.406
Heard of CPCs	1400	.00	1.00	.291	.454
Identify Correct that Resident of CPC	1400	.00	1.00	.276	.447
Liberal	1400	.00	1.00	.161	.367
Moderate	1400	.00	1.00	.333	.471
Recent Mover	1400	.00	1.00	.174	.379
Long-Term Resident	1400	.00	1.00	.068	.252
Renter	1400	.00	1.00	.614	.487
African American	1400	.00	1.00	.131	.338
Asian American	1400	.00	1.00	.029	.167
Latino	1400	.00	1.00	.024	.154
Native American	1400	.00	1.00	.048	.214
Other Race/Ethnicity	1400	.00	1.00	.014	.116
Male	1400	.00	1.00	.019	.135
Age	1400	19	96	.449	.498
Married	1352	.00	1.00	53.890	16.653
Childless	1359	.00	1.00	.666	.4712
Income Greater \$75K	1069	.00	1.00	.723	.448
Income Less \$30K	1069	.00	1.00	.394	.489

*Table 4*  
**OLS and Logit Regression Results**

	<i>Quality of Life (OLS)</i>	<i>Quality of County Services (OLS)</i>	<i>Quality of Land Use Decisions (OLS)</i>	<i>Strong Support Community Land Use Decisions (Logit)</i>	<i>Any Support Community Land Use Decisions (Logit)</i>
Constant	2.854*** (.168)	2.773*** (.179)	2.550*** (.178)	-.407	6.105
Rio Linda CPC	-.075 (.092)	-.105 (.097)	-.247** (.098)	.207	-.053
Fair Oaks CPC	.527*** (.091)	.226** (.097)	.200** (.096)	-.052	-.133
Arden Arcade CPC	.136 (.094)	.185* (.099)	.107 (.099)	.171	.091
Carmichael CPC	.392*** (.091)	.382*** (.097)	.245** (.098)	.063	.131
District 1	-.082 (.100)	.121 (.106)	.025 (.106)	.225	.069
District 2	-.139 (.103)	-.086 (.108)	.014 (.110)	.200	.361
District 3	.021 (.087)	.093 (.092)	.015 (.092)	.117	.143
District 4	.004 (.091)	.017 (.096)	.024 (.096)	.207	1.029*
Neighborhood Assoc Member	.179*** (.069)	.133* (.073)	.131* (.073)	-.065	-.123
Voter	.111 (.072)	.033 (.076)	.080 (.076)	.079	-.139
Active in Community	-.089 (.064)	-.128* (.068)	-.139** (.068)	.829	.014
Not Seen Local Govt Meeting	.074 (.069)	.091 (.073)	.010 (.073)	-.047	0.428
Identify Correct Land Use Agent	.118 (.144)	-.173** (.085)	-.226*** (.085)	.159	-.121
Heard of CPACs	.094 (.235)	-.039 (.084)	-.073 (.084)	-.063	.109
Heard of CPCs	.224** (.098)	.065 (.104)	.105 (.105)	.427***	2.485***
Identify Correct that Resident of CPC	-.149 (.205)	-.077 (.124)	-.197 (.125)	-.041	-.777***



*Table 4 (continued)*  
**OLS and Logit Regression Results**

	<i>Quality of Life (OLS)</i>	<i>Quality of County Services (OLS)</i>	<i>Quality of Land Use Decisions (OLS)</i>	<i>Strong Support Community Land Use Decisions (Logit)</i>	<i>Any Support Community Land Use Decisions (Logit)</i>
Liberal	.032 (.631)	.252*** (.071)	.047 (.071)	.167	.543*
Moderate	-.003 (.971)	.125 (.087)	-.136 (.087)	-.008	-.019
Recent Mover	.160 (.118)	.344*** (.125)	.153 (.126)	.194	.217
Long-Term Resident	-.043 (.066)	-.069 (.070)	-.125* (.070)	.015	.266
Renter	-.296*** (.098)	-.192*** (.104)	-.045 (.104)	.205	.092
African American	-.662*** (.174)	-.322* (.183)	-.336* (.184)	.039	1.188
Asian American	-.335* (.183)	.027 (.193)	-.064 (.201)	-.007	-.650**
Latino	.187 (.134)	.122 (.141)	-.136 (.143)	.151	.197
Native American	-.078 (.228)	.037 (.248)	.411* (.237)	.875	1.026
Other Race/Ethnicity	-.022 (.219)	-.242 (.231)	-.157 (.233)	-.141	-.562
Male	.002 (.061)	-.008 (.064)	.079 (.065)	-.129	.049
Age	.003 (.002)	.003 (.003)	.002 (.002)	-.003	-.015*
Married	.112 (.073)	.046 (.077)	.045 (.077)	.008	.999***
Childless	.021 (.783)	.096 (.079)	.109 (.079)	.107	-.087
Income Greater \$75K	.081 (.254)	-.079 (.075)	-.041 (.076)	.185	-.098
Income Less \$30K	-.053 (.560)	-.159* (.097)	.110 (.097)	-.420***	-.224
Number Observations	1060	1046	1014	1066	935
R-Squared	.163	.084	.085		
Adjusted R-Squared	.137	.055	.055		
Hit Ratio				55.2%	88.1%

\*\*\* Indicates statistical significance in a two-tailed test at greater than 99 percent confidence, \*\* indicates 95 – 99 percent confidence, and \* indicates 90 – 95 percent confidence

unit and all other explanatory variables are held constant. A regression coefficient is a midpoint estimate of a range of possible values that this influence is expected to take. If with a specified percent confidence this range does not contain zero, then this explanatory variable exerts a statistically significant non-zero influence on the explanatory variable. Regression coefficients with asterisks represent an effect that with at least 90 percent confidence is different from zero. Assume that regression coefficients without asterisks indicate explanatory variables that exert no influence on the given dependent variable.

As a way to understand the first three regression results in Table 4, consider an example based upon the quality of life regression. The mean of this dependent variable is 3.425 (from Table 2), or about half way between “good” and “very good.” The regression coefficient calculated for the Fair Oaks CPC is 0.527 and statistically significant from zero. That indicates that someone living in this CPC, that has the same characteristics as controlled for in the other explanatory variables in the regression model, rates their assessment of neighborhood quality of life at about 0.5 higher than someone living in an unincorporated portion of the county that is not in a CPC. This increase would clearly push the average Fair Oaks resident into the “very good” assessment of neighborhood quality of life. Similarly, the resident in the Carmichael CPC is likely to report a 0.392 increase in their assessment of quality of life. Also important to note for the subject of this paper is the regression coefficient reported for the heard of CPCs explanatory variable. If the surveyed resident reports that they have heard of Sacramento County’s formation of CPCs, holding other explanatory factors constant, they are likely to report a 0.224 increase in their assessment of quality of life.

Column (3) in Table 4 records the results of a regression analysis that uses a resident’s assessment of the quality of county services delivered to their neighborhood as the dependent variable. The average value for quality of county services is 3.149, or just above “good.” Living in the Fair Oaks, Arden Arcade, and Carmichael CPCs (relative to residence in an unincorporated portion of county not in a CPC) all raise one’s assessment of local public services. Now the increase is greater in Carmichael (0.382) than Fair Oaks (0.226); where previously, for quality of life, it was the opposite. There is no statistically significant influence of

whether the respondent had heard of CPCs on their appraisal of quality of county service.

A resident’s assessment of the quality of land use/economic development decisions in their neighborhood is the dependent variable evaluated in column (4) in Table 4. The average reported value for quality of land use is 2.762, which is below the average resident’s opinions on quality of life and local services, and in the less than “good” range. A Carmichael and Fair Oaks CPC resident is respectively expected to have an opinion that is 0.245 and 0.200 higher than a resident in a non-CPC portion of the unincorporated county. While a Rio Linda resident has, on average, an opinion of land use/development decisions that is -0.247 less than this CPC resident. Like in their assessment of local service quality, knowledge of the existence of the CPCs has no statistically significant influence on their opinion of quality of land use.

The dependent variables representing strong or any support for land use decisions made at the community level as opposed to the county level can take on a value of one or zero. This form of dependent variable requires a regression analysis that recognizes the strict dichotomous nature of the dependent variable and I use the Logit regression model. When using Logit, the regression coefficient cannot be interpreted directly (as with OLS), and instead interpretation is achieved by subtracting one from the natural exponent of the regression coefficient to yield the percentage increase in the likelihood that the dependent variable takes on a value of one for a one unit change in an explanatory variable. Thus, as listed in the fifth column of Table 4, someone who knows about the existence of CPCs is 42.7 percent more likely to be a strong supporter of land use decisions made at the neighborhood as opposed to county level. There is no evidence from this Logit regression that that residence in a Community Planning Council influences one’s strong support for neighborhood land use decisions. The dependent variable used for the Logit regression displayed in the last column of Table 4 expands the definition of a supporter of local land use decisions to be one who expresses both “strong” or “moderate” support for this concept. Again, residence in a CPC has no influence on one’s expressed support for this concept. But now if one knows about the existence of CPCs, they are 248.5 percent more likely to say that they are a moderate or strong supporter of neighborhood land use decisions.

A final set of ordinary least squares regression results are in Table 5. The regression models that form the basis of these tables are the same as used in Tables 4, columns (2) through (4), except interaction explanatory variables between heard of CPCs and residence in Rio Linda, Fair Oaks, Arden Arcade, or Carmichael CPCs have been added. These are included so the influence of a residence knowing about the Community Planning Councils can be separately measured for each CPC area. In the previous regressions, the influence of CPC knowledge was constrained to be constant across all four of the Community Planning Councils.

In the second column of Table 5, which uses quality of life as its dependent variable, the influence of a resident’s knowledge of CPCs is greater in Rio

Linda than in other unincorporated portions of the county. Interestingly, the inclusion of an interaction also makes the Rio Linda CPC explanatory variable significant and negative. Residents of the Rio Linda CPC, holding other explanatory variable factors constant, have a lower opinion of their quality of life than residents in the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County that do not possess a CPC (the excluded category). However, by adding the Rio Linda CPC regression coefficient to the appropriate interaction regression coefficient ( $-0.224 + 0.487 = 0.263$ ), this opinion turns positive for those that have heard of CPCs. In the third column of Table 5, which assesses what drives opinions on the quality of county services, CPC knowledge exerts a greater positive influence in Arden Arcade.

*Table 5*  
**Partial<sup>A</sup> OLS Regression Results**

	<i>Quality of Life</i>	<i>Quality of County Services</i>	<i>Quality of Land Use Decisions</i>
Rio Linda CPC	-.224** (.106)	-.123 (.113)	-.289** (.113)
Fair Oaks CPC	-.568*** (.105)	.160 (.113)	.182* (.111)
Arden Arcade CPC	.087 (.108)	.047 (.115)	.087 (.115)
Carmichael CPC	.463*** (.107)	.359*** (.113)	.273** (.115)
Heard of CPC	.165 (.154)	-.144 (.163)	.063 (.163)
Rio Linda CPC × Heard of CPC	.487** (.019)	.175 (.219)	.159 (.223)
Fair Oaks CPC × Heard of CPC	-.088 (.208)	.298 (.221)	.080 (.222)
Arden Arcade CPC × Heard of CPC	.213 (.218)	.538*** (.230)	.087 (.232)
Carmichael CPC × Heard of CPC	-.152 (.207)	.170 (.219)	-.055 (.222)
Number Observations	1060	1046	1014
R-Squared	.173	.089	.086
Adjusted R-Squared	.144	.057	.053

<sup>A</sup>All explanatory variables contained in Table 4 included in this regression analysis, but only partial results reported here.

\*\*\* Indicates statistical significance in a two-tailed test at greater than 99 percent confidence, \*\* indicates 95 – 99 percent confidence, and \* indicates 90 – 95 percent confidence.

## CONCLUSIONS

The statistical results contained in Table 4 indicate that a survey respondent with the same political activism, political knowledge, political opinion, community connection, and socio-economic characteristics as another; but living in a CPC rather than the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County, is likely to have a different opinion on the quality of life, quality of county services, and quality of land use decisions they experience. In fact, with only the exception of residents of the Rio Linda CPC and their opinions on the quality of land use, opinions in these CPC neighborhoods are always more positive. As Tiebout would concur, greater local control is correlated with greater community satisfaction.

Unfortunately, the regression results do not decisively prove the causal existence of this expected relationship. These findings could very well be due to the presence of CPCs in these areas and/or quality differences in the way that these CPCs are performing. However, the existing statistical analyses cannot indicate with certainty as to whether there may be other "fixed effects" in these neighborhoods that are causing these survey response differences in these CPCs. A second set of survey results will be needed to do this. What can be decisively said is this: if a survey respondent has heard of the County's implementation of Community Planning Councils, they are more likely to rate their community's quality of life higher and support land use/development decisions being made at the local rather than county level. This finding was particularly strong in the Rio Linda community.

The next step in the analysis will involve the calculation of the same regression results using data from the December 2007 survey. A reasonable test to see if the presence of a CPC has increased the perception of quality of life, quality of county services, or quality of land use decisions is to see if the regression coefficients calculated for the CPC dummy explanatory variables have changed in a statistically significant manner. If the regression coefficient calculated on the Fair Oaks CPC explanatory variable in the quality of county services regression has risen to 0.556, from the previous value of 0.226, then it is reasonable to state (if nothing else major has changed in this neighborhood) that the actions of the Fair Oaks CPC has raised a typical resident's perception of their quality of county services by 0.300.<sup>4</sup>

As given earlier in Table 4, for a resident's assessment of the quality of life experienced in their neighborhood, there is evidence that knowledge of the presence of CPCs raises this assessment by 0.224 (from a mean of 3.425, based upon the 5-point scale used here). As also shown in Table 4, the increase that knowledge of CPC has on one's support for community land use decisions is a 248 percent increase in its likelihood. It will also be interesting to rerun these regressions using the December 2007 survey data, when knowledge of CPCs should be greater, to see if this influence has changed or spread to influencing a resident's opinion on quality of county services or quality of land use decisions.

Finally, it is worth considering information garnered from the 102 respondents in the July of 2006 survey that have directly interacted with their Community Planning Councils. This group was asked to evaluate their CPC experience on a one (less than fair) to five (excellent) scale. The overall average rank was 2.63. I then separately calculated the average response to this question for each of the four CPCs: Rio Linda (2.65), Fair Oaks (2.75), Arden Arcade (2.67), and Carmichael (2.78). The appropriate t-tests for the equality of means indicates that all of these CPC-specific means are not far enough apart to be considered statistically different. So at this point, the average experience that residents have had with their CPC is slightly below a "good" ranking and there are no discernable differences across CPCs. It will be informative to observe if this has changed in the second survey. In addition, there should be more than the 102 current observations from people who have interacted with their CPC. This variable could then be used as an additional explanatory variable in the regressions to see if more than knowledge of a CPC, and actual interaction and/or quality of interaction, has on one's assessment of the dependent variables used here.

The study is on track and these first-round findings indicate that the results of an analysis of the second set of survey results should be very informative in regard to drawing final conclusions on the efficacy of Sacramento County's efforts at bringing greater local control to land use decisions through Community Planning Councils. However, one cannot be certain that the success of CPCs as measured here will stem the rising tide for further incorporations in Sacramento County. Knowledge of CPCs is positively correlated with an increase in a resident's desire for local as opposed to county control of

land use decisions. But, instead of offering an alternative to incorporation, Community Planning Councils may turn out to be instruments that further illustrate the benefits of additional incorporations in Sacramento County's now Uncity.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See *Sacramento Bee*, 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> These regressions are now available from the author upon request.
- <sup>3</sup> It is theoretically more appropriate to use a regression technique that takes into account the ordered nature of the dependent variable. I have run ordered Probit regression models and the results were substantially similar. I choose to report the ordinary least squares regression results because they are easier to interpret.
- <sup>4</sup> These regression analyses have been completed since the paper was presented at the 2007 NTA conference. The findings show that residence in the Arden Arcade and Carmichael CPCs after their implementation has raised the average respondent's opinion of their quality of life, quality of county services, and quality of land use decisions. Further details are available upon request.

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