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Why New Cities Form: An Examination into Municipal Incorporation in the United States 1950–2010

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Abstract

Municipal incorporation can have profound impacts on the urban and political geography of the regions in which they incorporate. These impacts and declines in the rate of municipal formation lead to the question of why municipalities incorporate. The authors synthesize an overview and analysis of the historical literature with a media literature review to construct a comprehensive classification system of theories that explain municipal incorporations. Twelve new micromotives such as eligibility for government grants and economic development are identified. Moreover, the review surprisingly reveals that spatial motives, in contrast to service motives, play the largest role in new municipal incorporations.

Keywords

newly incorporated municipalities (NIMs), municipal incorporation, boundary change, cities, typology, land use

Introduction

Municipal incorporation can have profound impacts on the urban and political geography of the regions in which they incorporate. New municipalities can impact taxes, school districts, elected representation, and public utility services. Additionally, new cities also have external impacts on surrounding landscapes and can lead to metropolitan fragmentation and competition for limited financial resources amongst local governments. Since 1950, the United States has witnessed the incorporation of more than 3,310 new municipalities. Yet, in the 1950s, while the United States had a new city form every three days, by the first decade of the new century, from 2000 to 2010, the rate had dropped to a new city every twenty-four days, or an 86.2 percent decline in new city formation (Waldner, Rice, and Smith 2013). This precipitous decline in municipal incorporation raises an interesting question. Why do new cities, towns, and villages incorporate? Do they form to fight off annexations; to provide more libraries, parks, and other urban services; to stop racial change; or for other reasons? This complex political, economic, social, and geographic phenomenon warrants a better understanding, particularly because of impacts to the planning profession.

Newly incorporated municipalities (NIMs) are of particular interest to urban planners for a variety of reasons. First, planners are often responsible for interacting with new municipalities. Planners help develop comprehensive plans for and in response to new cities and are tasked with developing optimal land use and zoning to manage growth. Second, planners help evaluate the need for public services for a new municipality and have been known to mediate disputes between existing and new municipalities. The planning profession is also often involved at the state level in helping to develop or change laws pertaining to the incorporation of new territory. Moreover, NIMs influence budgetary and planning responsibilities for the remaining unincorporated county due to redistribution of property taxes and land-use responsibilities. Ultimately, planners are often charged with the implementation of municipal incorporation actions that are decided upon by elected officials and which greatly influence the quality of life for communities in which they serve. Of critical importance to all the tasks that a planner must deal with is an understanding of why a community decides to incorporate.

As a result, the purpose of this article is twofold. First, this article provides an overview and analysis of the existing literature on municipal incorporation from a diverse array of academic disciplines. Second, a media literature review of newspaper articles on municipal incorporations between 1997 and 2007 is analyzed and merged into the overall research on municipal incorporation. The Introduction explains the goals of the review and why new municipal formation is relevant to planners. The Context section provides definitions and a

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Table 1. Municipal Incorporation Activity and Population Growth in the United States 1950–2010.

Decade	Number of NIMS Created per Decade	%Change in NIMs	Population Growth in the United States per Decade	%Change in US Population Growth
1950–1959	1,074		28,641,498	
1960–1969	810	−24.6	24,847,318	−13.2
1970–1979	677	−16.4	22,378,541	−9.9
1980–1989	338	−50.1	21,763,743	−2.7
1990–1999	263	−22.2	25,871,583	18.9
2000–2009	148	−43.7	9,481,144	−63.4

Sources: Data for 1950 obtained from Richard Stauber, New Cities in America 1965; Data for 1960–1990s used the Census Bureau Boundary and Annex Survey (BAS) with amendments by *The Municipal Yearbook* 1979; Data for 2000s taken from the US Census Bureau Boundary and Annex Survey excluding upward bound entities (e.g., village to town or town to city); Population data taken from US Census Bureau Population Estimates.

brief background of incorporation in the United States and the limitations of the analysis. The next section focuses on theories that have developed on municipal formation from 1950 to 2010. Subsections from six major disciplines demonstrate the influence of lens and how they affect the interpretation of factors that affect the creation of cities. The article then turns to the media literature review, a content analysis of newspaper articles on municipal incorporation from 1997 to 2007. It is here that new categories emerge and a typology is developed. The conclusion summarizes what was learned from combining the analysis of the historical review with the media content analysis.

The analysis conducted in this study offers a fundamentally different perspective from the traditional literature review explaining NIM formation. The two reviews on municipal incorporation research are synthesized into a comprehensive classification system or typology from which planners can easily understand the motivations surrounding municipal incorporation. The typology reveals that spatial factors, particularly land use and growth control are the most frequent factors explaining why new municipalities form. In addition, the analysis uncovered twelve new factors that had not been previously identified in research on municipal formation.

Context

Before exploring why communities incorporate, it is useful to understand the process of incorporation, alternatives to new city formation, and the historical and cultural context for incorporation. The process of creating a new city, town, or village is called incorporation. NIMs refer exclusively to the creation of a city, town, or village in a previously unincorporated community; thus, NIMs do not include other established forms of boundary changes such as annexations, municipal consolidation, and so on. In the United States, the unincorporated community is part of a county (we focus exclusively on municipal incorporation in the United States because of the unique intergovernmental structure and values that shape American municipal formation). Before incorporation, the county typically governs the community's affairs in many states and may provide services to the community. After incorporation, the new city assumes governance responsibilities such as land-use planning, though the new city may choose to contract with the county or private companies for services, such as for water, sewer, fire, and police. When cities contract with the county for services, it is sometimes referred to as a Lakewood plan city, after Lakewood's innovative and widely copied contract with Los Angeles County in 1954 (Miller 1981). Lands not part of the new city remain unincorporated and county-governed (though in some states, a system of townships prevails and no unincorporated land exists). This review focuses only on newly incorporated entities (villages that become towns or towns that become cities are not included). Due to various reasons explained further in this review (stricter laws regarding population, approval and fiscal review, and alternative forms of government such as special districts and private owner associations [POAs]), the growth rate of new municipalities since the benchmark work of Stauber in the 1950s has been declining (Table 1).

The formation of new local governments on the political landscape is somewhat of a unique phenomenon, especially when compared with Europe's experience with local government boundary change. Due to the federalist system of government and its emphasis on shared governance, American states have a much larger role in local government boundary change. Specifically, each state determines the rules of boundary change within its jurisdiction (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Rights 1987). As a result, local government boundary change actions tend to be instigated at a very local geography. Meanwhile, many Unitary states in Europe function differently with local government boundary change power resting in the hands of a central authority and local government boundary change actions being generated from the top down (Glassner and Fahrer 2004). Central decision making leads to more mergers occurring in Europe in an attempt to capture economies of scale at the local public service level and to provide for regional planning (Meligrana 2004). In the United States, most local governments are unwilling to part with accumulated power.

New municipalities can impact taxes, land-use decisions, environmental regulations, school districts, elected representation, and public utility services. The creation of a new city, town, or village can potentially enhance citizen participation and economic efficiency as the NIMs drive down the costs of services through competition (Tiebout 1956; Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961; Buchanan 1971; Peterson 1981; Lowery and Lyons 1989; Stein 1987). Other scholars have identified more

detrimental impacts. When several cities incorporate in a county, this may lead to metropolitan fragmentation (Cox and Jonas 1993; Ingalls and Rassel 2005; Hogen-Esch 2001), which may in turn contribute to sprawl (Carruthers and Ulfarsson 2002; Carruthers 2003) and racial or socioeconomic segregation (Burns 1994; Smith and Debbage 2011). Some scholars suggest that metropolitan fragmentation may also create impediments to regional governance, though recent scholarship suggests that to the contrary, a multitude of local governments can operate as a complex and functional nuanced local public economy with highly interconnected regional governance network (Oakerson and Parks 2011). Alternatives for unincorporated communities include annexation to an existing city (Edwards 2008), formation of a special district (Foster 1997), creation of a sphere of influence (extraterritorial jurisdiction) around an existing city (Anderson 2008), merger with a larger municipality (Marando 1979), and creation of a homeowners association (Glasze 2006) among other possibilities (e.g., recent work by Rogers (2010) has highlighted the potential role of deed-restricted subdivisions as a substitute for NIMs). As such, the incorporation literature is part of a broader literature on boundary changes and political control (Feiock and Carr 2001).

Annexation is the most often utilized form of local government boundary change in the United States and has been linked to municipal incorporation efforts by urban scholars for decades. Over the last decade, almost 100,000 annexations occurred compared to 148 municipal incorporations according to US Census data (U.S. Census Bureau 2012a). Annexations are more numerous for a variety of reasons. Annexations are a tool for the approximately 20,000 currently existing municipalities to improve tax revenue and expand boundaries. These 20,000 local governments already have the legislative authority (although annexation legislation differs from state to state) along with professional staff and a budget to conduct annexation proceedings to varying degrees.

While annexation activity far exceeds municipal incorporation events, it does not diminish the importance of studying municipal incorporation. Municipal incorporation proceedings have major ramifications on the urban and political landscape of the regions in which they are formed. Additionally, the NIMs of the 1990s alone impacted the lives of more than 1.6 million US citizens directly (Smith and Debbage 2011). Millions more were indirectly impacted through the establishment of these new municipalities and their influence on public services, funding, and democratic representation. For the purposes of this literature review, we focus exclusively on NIMs as opposed to other boundary changes such as annexations or consolidations (mergers) as they represent fundamentally different types of boundary change phenomena with different motivations and effects.

Why NIMs Incorporate—A Historical Perspective

The scholarly literature suggests that the reasons for incorporation change over time. Wallis (1994) specifies three stages of incorporation—from consolidation and annexation in the nineteenth and twentieth century to fragmentation in the mid-twentieth century, and finally, to the modern era where there is a need and demand for regional governance. Covering a shorter period of time, Burns (1994) attributes the motivations for municipal incorporation from service provision and racial factors in the 1950–1960s to lowering taxes in subsequent years. This review builds upon these works to provide a more varied and nuanced picture of societal factors influencing incorporation. A historical literature review is presented in juxtaposition to a media literature review of newspapers. The factors identified in the historical literature review are combined with those identified in the media analysis to yield a comprehensive classification system.

Land Use, Growth Controls, and Spatial Considerations

Spatial considerations (which include perspectives on planning, land use, zoning, and management of space and people) led to one of the first theories behind municipal incorporation—population growth and urbanization. Stauber (1965) discussed the proliferation of municipal formation in the 1950s—1,074 new municipalities for that decade. The predominant belief at that time was that municipalities formed where there was new growth and this coincided with urbanization/suburbanization (Schmandt 1961; Wood 1961; Stauber 1965; Burns 1994). In the 1950s, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) accounted for 85 percent of the increase in the nation's total population, with much of it occurring in the suburbs (Stauber 1965, 1). The mid-century suburbanization, brought on by federal policies (Campbell and Meranto 1976), pent-up housing demand after World War I (Weiher 1991), and white flight (Berry 1973; Danielson 1976; Farley 1976; Judd 1979) stimulated population dispersion and the growth of suburbs in the United States.

The connection between population growth and new cities or towns is logical—suburbanization drives people to unincorporated communities, driving up the demand for services and creating an atmosphere ripe for municipal incorporations. However, this connection, though intuitive, has yet to be fully substantiated. Stauber (1965) noted that some evidence existed—the total number of municipalities increased by 4.5 percent with the number of municipalities in SMSAs increasing by 7.7 percent. Yet Schmandt (1961), while noting the importance of population expansion admitted that his statistical tests detected no relationship between population growth and incorporations. Rigos and Spindler's work (1991) also failed to find a statistical link between urban growth and NIMs. Rigos and Spindler along with Stauber further question this link by highlighting the substantial number of isolated or rural incorporations that occur.

The aforementioned studies were conducted on a national level conflating densely populated urban areas with rural, low population areas. Studies conducted on a more local level yield different results. Smith (2008) discovered that 70 percent of the new NIMs in North Carolina were located within a metropolitan statistical area. Additionally, Smith (2011)

determined that a statistical relationship existed between municipal incorporation and a county's population growth rate. Ingalls and Rasel (2005) also discuss the importance of population growth in a localized geography with their examination of annexation and incorporation in the Charlotte, NC region. Thus, recent research on more localized examinations supports theoretical propositions of population growth influencing municipal incorporation in the United States.

Although this article does not offer a comparison to countries outside the United States, it is interesting to note that the theory of population growth lies in contrast to the experience in Europe. The European population has increased while the number of municipalities has declined primarily through mergers and amalgamations of existing governments by central authorities (Meligrana 2004). As noted earlier, differences in the governmental structure of the two geographies and differing levels of urban maturity play a role in the growth of NIMs in the United States compared to Europe.

While the literature considered the role of population growth, the reality of sprawl (uncontrolled development into areas extending out from the urban/suburban center) was becoming evident. Byun and Esparza (2005) believe that incorporation extends greater control to residents who in turn seek restrictive growth controls (e.g., limited housing permits, population growth caps, urban growth service boundaries, minimum-lot zoning, and zoning for preservation of open space). Developers seek to avoid these controls and find areas where there are fewer to no controls, thus generating sprawl and subsequent further incorporations. Miller (1981) discusses six new cities that incorporated to prevent tract home development, noting that those actions might generate sprawl in the future as suburban developers leapfrog over the new cities to greenfields with fewer restrictions. Ironically though, Carruthers (2003, 478) also posits that ''sprawl is perpetuated through people's pursuit of small local governments.'' Ulfarsson and Carruthurs (2006) further find that metropolitan fragmentation leads to higher property values, less developed land, and lower densities. Razin and Rosentraub (2000), however, find that perhaps sprawl causes fragmentation instead of the reverse. Their work uncovered a weak but significant association between municipal fragmentation and suburban sprawl. They conclude that the impact of residential sprawl on fragmentation is significant but fragmentation does not predict sprawl.

While some residents moved away from growth areas resulting in sprawl, those that remained used other tools at their disposal to control their environment. Planners saw an increased focus on land use and zoning as tools for community control. Some communities incorporated to control land use and growth, often to stop undesirable land-use proposals or changes. In a study of incorporations since 1910, Fischel found that the dominant motive was land-use control (Teaford 1979; Fischel 2001). Sokolow et al. (1981) found that in California, local control, especially planning and land use, was the single most important reason for city incorporation. Miller (1981) identified the role of land use in some California incorporations. Musso (2001) also found that incorporation proposals were more likely to rise and get voter support in counties experiencing rapid growth. This suggests that local land-use policy was a significant factor in new incorporations. Residents have strong motivation to control growth and regulate land use in order to maintain lifestyle and property values (and in some cases, the land-use change may result in socioeconomic or racial change).

Services and the Consumer Voter

Another explanation for the suburbanization trend starting in the 1940s was sought by looking at the perspective of what local governments were offering to residents. Political economist Charles Tiebout (1956) offered a theory of local expenditure focusing on services that is one of the most widely accepted and also debated theories regarding the formation of municipalities. Essentially, Tiebout argued that local governments offer a ''mix'' of services that consumer-voters either choose to accept in which case they will remain in their neighborhood or reject in which case they will move to another area. In this open market, new communities form to reflect the service mix desired by consumers. Hence, Tiebout concludes, consumers that reject the inner city pattern of overpopulation and high costs may opt for suburbs, which offer more land, better schools, more parks, and so forth (Tiebout 1956). Others have pursued and found support for the idea of services being the reason for municipal incorporation (Stauber 1965; Teaford 1979; Miller 1981; Musso 2001). Conversely, some communities may incorporate because they want fewer redistributional services and the lower taxes associated with that choice (Miller 1981).

Several scholars have found fault with the public choice model and are critical of Tiebout's assumptions about consumer or resident behavior, the information residents have, and/or consumer's mobility. Sharp (1986) found that municipal services do not seem to play a large role in location decisions, especially in comparison to personal–economic motives such as income, job, and family considerations. Lowery and Lyons (1989) and Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog (1992) suggest that residents of both decentralized metro areas and consolidated metro areas are both equally uninformed about services. Weiher (1991) and Scott and Corzine (1971) also note that there are so many government services (cities, counties, school, fire, sewage, health, and transportation) that residents may not be able to make decisions based on an examination of municipal offerings as public choice theorists would argue.

Dowding, John, and Biggs (1994) demonstrate that wealthier households may move to avoid taxation, but it is unclear whether they move in response to local government expenditures. Teske (1993), on the other hand, argues that the relevant ''marginal'' consumer is the higher-income mover, who is more likely to be informed about local fiscal policy than lower-income residents. Bickers and Stein (1998) expound upon this, suggesting that high-income movers use different heuristics or informational devices than low-income movers.

They found that such heuristics allows these movers to sort themselves into better school districts.

Carruthers (2003), in his study of growth patterns across the United States and within fourteen rapid growth states 1992–1996, found that property tax was relatively insignificant perhaps because the taxes pay for more public goods and services, which in effect compensates owners thus reducing the amount of attrition due to high tax rates. Instead, Carruthers finds the noneconomic factor of race was important in predicting growth along with local land-use regulations, sewage investments, and the formation of special districts. Miller finds that sorting occurred, but not Tiebout-like sorting due to tastes in public goods—rather the sorting is based on ''differences in attitudes towards taxation and the scale of redistribution. The reason for creating or moving to a Lakewood Plan minimal city was not to signal something unique about one's demand for public goods, but to insulate one's property from the burden of supporting public services'' (Miller 1981, 84).

Hamilton (1975), an economist, argued that Tiebout's theoretical premise of jurisdictions behaving like markets was flawed. While having several markets may create a market-like setting, this market choice is not enough to guarantee efficiency—prices are needed as well, and local public goods do not have an adequate market-type pricing mechanisms. Thus, the city jurisdiction will never function as a market.

Dowding, John, and Biggs (1994) conducted an extensive review on articles analyzing Tiebout's theory and found that support of Tiebout's ideas depended on the methodology and focus of each study. Studies that examined aggregate services levels suggest that regions with many cities seem to be more efficient (Stein 1987; Heikkila 1996), whereas studies of the ''microfoundations'' of Tiebout's theories questioned the behavioral assumptions (Dowding, John, and Biggs 1994).

Politics, Policy, and Agency

The decades following the great expansion into the suburbs and the proliferation of municipalities found a number of new theories emerging in response to the resulting impacts caused by a number of new government entities and the increasing disparity between suburb and city. Political and policy-oriented theories emerged focusing on people, laws, and the relations and impacts between groups and institutions.

An intense debate in the political arena emerged over democracy in the form of local governments and those who believed the proliferation of new local governments hindered regional efforts on roads, transportation, water and sewer systems, and so forth. Porter (1922, 16) said, ''The outstanding characteristic of . . . the township is that they are, and always have been, areas for local self-government.'' According to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Rights (1987), municipal incorporations were the modern way citizens express control over their local environment and desires instead of the old town hall meetings. Yet, Martin (1957, 90) notes that when governments are too small they are ''too small to be truly democratic.''

Another persistent factor is politically motivated boundary changes and impacts such as annexation, consolidation, and fragmentation. The number of annexations far exceeds the number of municipal incorporations and the various concerns and reasons behind annexation remain persistent (e.g., in 2011 there were 1,697 annexations vs. nine municipal incorporations (US Census Bureau 2012a). Municipalities often form in response to annexation threats from other cities (Schmandt 1961; Beche 1963; Stauber 1965; Miller 1981; Fleischmann 1986; Rigos and Spindler 1991; Burns 1994; Liner and McGregor 1996; Smith 2007; Smith and Debbage 2011). Mumphrey, Wildgen, and William (1990, 17) found that many incorporations are ''defensive incorporations,'' created to stave off the threat of annexation, indicating that incorporation ''is used as a political prophylactic, or preemptive, to halt annexation'' in many cases. Motives to avoid annexation vary from concerns about higher taxes to a desire not to be governed by the annexing jurisdiction.

As municipalities proliferated, states felt the need to limit or inhibit the number of new governments. Studies were conducted examining the effect of policy on municipal formation concluding that state boundary policies affect incorporation (Beche 1963; Hill 1974; Galloway and Landis 1986; Rigos and Spindler 1991; Facer II 2006; Smirnova and Ingalls 2007; Martin and Wagner 1978). By 1978, 60 percent of all states had minimum population requirements; by 1990, 80 percent of all states had, at minimum, some type of population requirement and often they had additional requirements; for example, a voting requirement for the people who would be incorporated, and so forth (Hill 1978; US Census Bureau 2012). Since these laws were put into effect, the number of incorporations has declined significantly (Waldner, Rice, and Smith 2013). Martin and Wagner's (1978) research on the establishment of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in California through legislation passed by the California Legislature in 1963 is a prime example of state intervention limiting incorporations. While the focus of their analysis was local government spending, Martin and Wagner's (1978, 425) results showed that LAFCO ''can be credited with a 42 percent reduction on the formation of municipal incorporations.'' The authors assume that this reduction in incorporation activity is attributable to the new legislation passed as a result of a wave of incorporation activity in the 1950s.

More recently, the passage of legislation that impacts the financial security of communities has been of increasing relevance to municipal incorporation efforts. Proposition 13 and a revenue neutrality law that holds new municipalities responsible for lost county revenues have also had an impact on municipal incorporation activity in the state. As a by-product of the Lakewood Plans ''minimal cities'' (cities that formed with the intent not to increase services but to primarily avoid higher taxes), California has been proactive in changing the legislative framework in which new communities can incorporate. Specifically, the regulations that guide municipal incorporation have been altered in an attempt to measure the impacts of new cities and to also understand the financial

sustainability surrounding the incorporation of a new community. Minimal cities that often provide limited services and low taxes are under increasing scrutiny. Likewise, single land-use communities (e.g., Industry and Commerce) are being viewed with a much more critical eye due to the negative financial impact these industrial/commercial enclaves can have on surrounding communities. A single-land-use city (e.g., a city composed of commercial property) can artificially keep property taxes low since they do not have to provide a full assortment of municipal services common in mixed land-use municipalities that have residents. Likewise, communities near single land-use cities may not be able to raise enough tax dollars without the inclusion of the more lucrative industrial and commercial properties that have been removed as a result of the incorporation of a single land-use municipality.

It may be misleading to attribute all of Martin and Wagner's (1978) findings to the passage of the Knox-Nisbet Act. The dilemma is whether the numerous incorporations of the 1950s reduced pressure to incorporate or did the legislation truly have a profound impact on incorporations. Rigos and Spindler's study on incorporation activity at the national level contradicted the conclusion of Martin and Wagner's work. Rigos and Spindler (1991) found that incorporation laws (i.e., Knox-Nisbet Act) were not of significance when they conducted their national study of incorporation activity.

Interestingly, as annexation and municipal corporation laws have become stricter, alternative forms of government such as special districts and quasi-governmental governments such as private residential associations or gated communities, have experienced quantum leaps in growth. Over a twenty-year period, from 1972 to 1992, the number of special districts increased 39 percent while the number of municipalities increased only 4 percent (Zimmerman 1994). Smirnova and Ingalls (2007) found a statistically significant relationship between strictness of annexation laws and the number of special districts, an alternative to forming a general-purpose municipal government.

Another innovative response to increasingly strict laws surrounding incorporation has been the formation, primarily by the more affluent and white segment of society, of POAs (Kennedy 1995; Frantz 2006; Glasze 2006; McKenzie 2011) or "public club realms" (Webster 2002). Private Owner Associations (POAs), the majority of which are gated communities of single-family homes, have also exploded in growth. An ACIR report cites Community Association Institute estimates (based on voluntary HOA reports). "In 1970, there were 10,000 [*residential associations*] . . . and in 1992, 150,000 covering 32 million people or roughly twelve percent of the population," an increase of approximately 1,400 percent over twenty-two years (Kennedy 1995, 762).

Public policy scholars, seeing the effect of fragmentation and/or consolidation, sought to explore in more depth the forces behind municipal incorporation. They began to look at the actors responsible for the policy of incorporation. Some researchers viewed incorporation as, in part, a result of political entrepreneurship by actors or parties who personally or institutionally benefit from the incorporation (Sokolow et al. 1981; Schneider and Teske 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Feiock and Carr 2001; Musso 2001). Universities, civic organizations, chambers of commerce and industrial association (Marando 1974), public officials, suburban residents, and business interests (Fleischmann 1986), manufacturers, real estate developers (Burns 1994), and city officials (Foster 1997) are actors that support reform in boundary changes mainly for political purposes such as an increase in revenue, avoidance of local taxes, selection of public services, and enhanced political and social benefits. Feiock and Carr (2001) also explore the role of boundary entrepreneurs as necessary to overcome the collective action problem inherent in NIMs. These boundary actors include an array of public officials (e.g., municipal or county-elected officials), business associations (e.g., chamber of commerce, manufacturers, developers), and resident/citizen organizations (e.g., civic groups, academic organizations, homeowner associations, etc.).

Race, Income, and Equity Considerations

The movement of masses to the suburbs and their ensuing municipalities brought out issues of equity, racism, and income disparity, as it related to the formation of new local governmental entities. In a sociological analysis of the intersection between institutions, people, and their patterns, race and/or socioeconomic exclusion appeared to be underlying factors that stimulated incorporations (Danielson 1976; Miller 1981; Teaford 1986; Weiher 1991; Rider 1992; Blakely and Snyder 1997; Musso 2001; Carruthers 2003; Alesina, Baqir, and Hoxby 2004). As Orfield (1976, 381) declared, "In United States society, physical separation is reinforced by race, a bitter history of race relations, and an increasing tendency for political boundaries to become racial boundaries." From 1940 to 1960, African Americans could not get a loan from the bank, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or the Veterans Administration (VA) for home ownership in suburban areas. The end result was white flight into the suburbs and increased minoritization of inner cities (Sclar and Hook 1993). Weiher (1991) asserts that homogeneous communities use political boundaries to exclude certain races or economic classes. Incorporation provides communities with exclusionary powers such as land-use control (e.g., large-lot zoning; Rider 1992; Burns 1994). Moreover, formal geographic boundaries make "a place more socially, economically and politically distinctive as well as more geographically distinctive" (Downs 1973, 43). Thus, boundaries support sorting among people who have preferences about where they wish to live, work, and learn. Potential residents use city boundaries as a cognitive framework to screen out unsuitable areas. Thus, political boundaries are "instrumental in creating place identity" (Weiher 1991, 60). Settlers then further sort themselves into cities and produce a landscape resembling a mosaic of race and class groups.

A rich expanding literature base continues to develop on quasi-governmental private residential associations, commonly known as gated communities, and their impact on new city

formation. As noted earlier, these associations are generally homogenous entities composed of predominantly white, affluent groups that isolate themselves primarily for security reasons but also for status and privilege (Glasze 2006). Private associations are perceived as an alternative to NIMs (Kennedy 1995) or an extension of local government (McKenzie 2011) or a new development based on the excludability of public space (Webster 2002) since they offer more upscale amenities, more local control, and better safety over parts of the public realm than local government (Blakely and Snyder 1997). Additionally, these associations have often been successful in capturing public resources and isolating them for private use; for example, St. Louis, MI, townships chained off formerly public streets for private use only (Kennedy 1995). However, Le Goix (2006) identifies growing issues that are leading some of these communities to incorporate. An aging infrastructure that is too costly for residential repair and a system of double taxation (residents pay association fees and taxes to the government for services such as security, lights, street repair, maintenance, etc.) are leading larger communities to incorporate so they can transfer private liability to public shoulders. Hence, groups that formed associations to isolate themselves by income and/or race are now forming municipal incorporations to maintain their privacy while protecting themselves from financial liability.

While new cities have higher percentages of whites and higher median household incomes than the United States or metropolitan areas (Musso 2001; Smith 2007), recent studies indicate a trend toward less isolation between minorities and whites. While blacks are still the most severely isolated, research indicates that segregation indexes are declining at the metropolitan level (Logan, Stults, and Farley 2004) and that there is less isolation where there are lower percentages of racial minorities (Lee et al. 2008).

Financial Considerations

Over the decades, scholars have studied the regional and individual fiscal motives behind municipal incorporation. Some cities incorporate to lower taxes. On the regional level, Miller's (1981) analysis of several Lakewood Plan cities in Los Angeles demonstrated that many new cities incorporated to limit property tax burden on homeowners and businesses, and limit the size of government bureaucracies and welfare programs (the new cities also wished to avoid annexation attempts by the city of Los Angeles). Similarly, Tkacheva (2008) found that more NIMs are formed in counties with a large volume of retail trade. By capturing the retail trade assets, the newly formed city can increase its service level while reducing or maintaining its taxes (i.e., by shifting cost of services to those outside the municipality that patronize the retail establishments).

On the individual level, the literature suggests fiscal and other explanatory variables that may stimulate NIMs. Carruthers (2003) suggests that the pursuit of bigger homes, lower density, and avoidance of higher taxes (associated with cities) drive residents to form new jurisdictions around growth centers in unincorporated areas. As growth centers increase in population, additional communities may incorporate. Rigos and Spindler (1991) note that strong state and county functional roles, along with low property tax limitations, also appear to encourage incorporations (property tax limitations help reassure citizens that they will not face significant tax increases). Musso's work emphasizes the relationship of wealth to NIM formation. In her model, increasing the median housing value in a census-defined place by one standard deviation ($7,021) raised the probability of seeking incorporation to "a whopping 92 percent." (Musso 2001, 147).

Patterns of Proliferation

In analyzing municipal incorporations from an anthropological perspective of group dynamics and differences between groups of people, there are patterns of incorporation that have continued over a significant period of time. Since the 1950s, certain regional patterns have been persistent (Stauber 1965; Waldner, Rice, and Smith 2013). Regionally, states in the southern part of the country average higher number of incorporations than any other region while northern New England states, where there is little land to develop, average the lowest number of new municipalities. Additionally, there are some states that have stayed in the top ten in terms of new incorporations since the 1950s (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Missouri, North Carolina, and Texas). Whether it is lenient state incorporation laws or a regional culture that breeds incorporations, it is clear that there are marked spatial patterns to municipal incorporation.

Stauber (1965, 14) suggests that "Municipalities, or the forces that beget municipalities, appear to beget more municipalities over time within the same general area." Using the county as the unit of analysis, there is evidence of municipalities incorporating as a result of municipalities forming nearby. This cluster effect is summed up by Smith and Debbage (2006) as follows, "The geography of these clustering NIMs can be partially explained by a 'herd mentality' where a local political culture is established that facilitates the diffusion of a NIM ideology in response to the aggressive annexation tactics of neighboring cities" (Smith 2007, 111). The herd mentality does not always occur as a result of annexation threats. In Fulton County, Georgia, four municipalities formed within a span of four years after incorporation laws were relaxed with more municipalities forming in contiguous counties. The cluster effect may be partially explained by the increasing segregation of the affluent (Musso 2001; Fischer et al. 2004; Peters 2012) and the finding that "wealthier communities in high-growth counties are more likely to propose formation of a city" (Musso 2001, 139). Other societal factors such as race, region, urban maturity, and local issues can foster or diffuse clusters. In the rural south, Aiken (1987) documented how "underbounding" (exclusion of the surrounding lower-income and lower-served population) led to the formation of a number of municipalities in Mississippi in order to avoid giving political power to the surrounding predominantly African American areas. These findings are supported

by studies of towns in North Carolina and long-term, low-income, unincorporated urban areas contiguous to cities nationwide (Moss 2004; Anderson 2008). Additionally, regional differences in the administration of local government boundary changes and the urban maturity of a region may impact overall clustering activity. As has been previously discussed, the presence of local government boundary change bodies in several states (e.g., California and Washington) can limit clustering. Similarly, state laws that include a minimum distance between proposed and existing municipalities can effectively diffuse municipal clusters. Finally, the maturity of the region in which the clustering occurs is relevant. Much of the northeast and midwest regions of the United States have experienced a longer period of urbanization, which has resulted in a stagnant political geography. Meanwhile, the south, which has more recently experienced a period of urbanization, has more unincorporated territory and a more lenient philosophy in which to carry out incorporation proceedings. This has resulted in a large clustering of new municipalities in the South (Smith and Debbage 2006; Waldner, Rice, and Smith 2013).

Finally, the influence of corporations causing others to form may be due to the same forces acting upon different communities in the same environment. As the ACIR suggests, we should think of "a cluster of local governments in a particular region not as a fragmented maze but as a 'local public economy'" (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Rights 1987, iii).

Why New Cities Form—The Media Literature Review

The literature review presented thus far encompasses the major theories on factors affecting municipal incorporation. Yet, while many theories have been introduced, there has been no typology or categorization by which these theories can be grouped and assessed. This is due in part to the varying perspectives accounting for a new municipality. In part, it is also due to the probability that multiple factors are at play.

Therefore, the authors extend this review by conducting a media literature review analyzing newspaper articles on municipal incorporations formed between 1997 and 2007. The media review captured the rhetoric behind each incorporation studied, thus allowing a direct explanation of NIMS. The analysis revealed twenty-two factors that stimulate NIMs, including several mentioned in the literature such as annexation, land-use, and services. Other previously unacknowledged factors emerged, such as protection of rural identity or character, eligibility for water or sewer grants, and more.

The media analysis captured a new set of factors because it represents a fundamentally different lens. Content analysis is used to review newspaper articles rather than the statistical analyses often employed in NIM studies. By using a different data source, the media analysis captures a novel set of factors that stimulate new city formation, including some factors not previously discussed in the literature.

By 2007, a noticeable cluster of new cities had emerged in Fulton County, Georgia, thus precipitating this research effort to more fully understand the factors involved in new municipal incorporations. To create a time frame for the media review, we examined a full decade of materials, thus the 1997–2007 time frame. The selection of 2007 proved to be fortuitous as 2007 marked the year prior to the recession, when municipal incorporations sharply subsided. Thus, the 1997–2007 period captured an era of stable incorporation patterns as well as the emergence of prominent new city clusters of interest. Because the 1997–2007 time frame was selected, the results may overrepresent more recent factors (such as economic development) or underrepresent historic factors (such as suburbanization associated with freeway development).

The US Census Bureau Boundary Estimates database was used to identify all new incorporations, including cities, towns/townships, and villages (excluding upward bound changes such as village to city). To explore why communities choose to form new cities, we conducted a content analysis to identify the reasons why new cities formed, as captured by the newspaper articles discussing the new incorporation. The intent was to create a 100 percent sample of all NIMS from 1997 to 2007 (161 cities).

ProQuest Newspaper was chosen due to its archival materials from this era, specifically its full-text newspaper articles. For each NIM, a period of two years before incorporation and one year after was searched. Search terms such as "new city," "incorporation," "voting," the name of the city and the county were combined and used to identify newspaper articles that might capture the debate around incorporation or report on new incorporations. The results captured 79 of the 161 new municipalities, approximately 50 percent of the new municipalities identified. After the initial article capture, two coders independently reviewed and coded each article to identify why the community incorporated, with an attempt to identify the order of importance (e.g., whether land use or annexation threat was more important in that particular case).

The process for the newspaper analysis disaggregated the complexity of factors that led to incorporation. Twenty-two factors for incorporation were identified ranging from annexation threats to tourism (see Table 2). The newspaper analysis clearly revealed that NIM factors *work in tandem* to stimulate new cities, towns, and villages. Only ten new municipalities attributed their incorporation to only one factor—all others cited a multitude of factors in the incorporation decision.

In support of the literature, the threat of annexation was the most common factor cited in NIM formation. The concept of defensive or prophylactic annexations came up frequently. As one article explained, "As cities such as Charlotte and Wilmington turn to involuntary annexations as a way to help pay for growth, many smaller communities are seeking incorporation as a way to defend themselves" (*Morning Star* 1999). In some cases, the NIM wanted to avoid the higher taxes associated with being annexed, and in others, they simply did not wish to be under the city's control.

Table 2. Definitions and Frequencies of Factors Extracted from a Newspaper Review of Municipal.

Incorporation Factor	*# NIMs Influenced*	*Explanation*
Annexation	40	NIM created to defend community against annexation threat
Growth control/land use	36	NIM formed to fight undesirable growth/ land use proposals and to gain zoning control
Rural character/identity	23	NIM incorporates to preserve rural character or protect existing community identity
Services	24	NIM forms to provide or enhance public services (policy, fire, water/sewer, etc)
Revenue control	17	NIM forms to allow community to control local revenue (sales or property tax)
Dissatisfaction w/ county	12	NIM form due to dissatisfaction with county governance (spending patterns, political party affiliation, etc.).
Gov't funding eligibility	12	NIM formed to gain eligibility for federal and/ or state grant funding for water/ sewer or other projects
Economic development	10	NIM formed to attract economic development/growth
Race/ethnicity/cultural	8	NIM formed for exclusion purposes
Political clout	6	NIM formed to increase community's political standing in region or state.
Asset capture	5	NIM formed to capture revenue from major regional asset.
Influence of other NIMS	5	Nearby successful NIMs inspire other communities to incorporate
Ordinance/design code	5	NIMs formed to avoid countyordinances/design codes
Environmental laws	3	NIMs formed to avoid county or other environmental laws
Lower property taxes	3	NIM forms to lower property taxes
State law	3	Incorporation fueled by the easing of incorporation standards.
Increase property values	2	Incorporation portrayed as a method to increase a community's property values.
Single owner/profit	2	NIM forms for financial gain of a community largely owned by a single individual or entity
Water supply	2	NIM motivated by access to and control over water supplies and rights.
Exit state control	1	NIM formed to exit direct state governance of the community
Historical preservation	1	NIM formed to promote historic preservation within community
Tourism	1	Incorporation formed to increase map visibility of community and tourism

Growth control/land use was another prevalent factor. Municipalities in this category formed in response to perceived undesirable growth, to promote quality of life, and to gain zoning authority. One resident explained it thusly, "This village was born because people were concerned about land use issues. We have developers knocking on our door. We need to have a game plan so that we know where the village is going in the future" (Mannion 2001, 4SW.1). Some NIMs form to stop undesirable land-use. Irena, MO—with a population of twelve—incorporated to prevent a proposed hog farm from locating in their neighborhood (Omaha World Herald 1999). Loch Loyd MO incorporated into the Village of Loch Lloyd in order to extend its subdivision boundary 300 feet beyond its original border to protect itself from encroachment from nearby mobile homes (St. Louis Dispatch 2005).

A new and frequently cited factor involved the community's desire to protect their rural character and/or their community identity. In Grant Valkaria FL, "Residents still look up and see the stars at night, not the backside of a shopping center in the glare of 24-hour security lights" (Sellers 2006, 1). Note that the rural character/identity factor may overlap somewhat with the growth control/land-use category, as perceived land-use change may have in some cases generated a perceived threat to that character. However, it was perceived as a stand-alone factor not explicitly intertwined with land-use issues.

Services, an oft-mentioned explanation for NIMs in the literature, received significant support in the newspaper analysis. Common service desires included more street repair and police. Services were a factor in the four new cities that formed in Fulton County, Georgia (in the Atlanta metropolitan area). "We are talking about the services that touch people's lives every day," said a resident (Bennett 2006, D1). Generally, the communities incorporating for service felt that they received short shrift from the governing county and/or service levels not commensurate with their tax contributions.

The desire to control the community's revenue emerged as another new and influential factor. Some residents voted for incorporation so that "We can control our own money and control our own destiny" (Willon 1999). Dissatisfaction with the county at times took a particular focus such as tax spending, land-use, services, or political party differences. However, often the dissatisfaction was more generalized in nature. For example, "residents frequently chafed at unpopular decisions made by haughty officials "downtown"" (Freedberg 2003, B6).

It is worth noting that eligibility for government funds was identified as a primary reason more than a secondary reason for city formation. Some communities incorporated largely to become eligible for water or sewer grants. For example, Bedias, TX, and other communities in Grimes County faced "sewage problems and incorporated as cities as a result"

(Hensley 2007, 1). Government funding eligibility as a factor in NIM formation has not been adequately considered thus far in the scholarly literature.

Ironically, though many NIMs form to prevent or slow growth, there are some that incorporate to promote or enhance growth and attract revenues through economic development. For example, Gustavus, Alaska, suffered financial losses from fisheries closures when the federal government established a preserve in Glacier Bay. In hopes of facilitating infrastructure and attracting growth, the community chose to incorporate. As the sign hanging over the heads of Gustavus City Council members reads, "We hope our ship comes in before the dock rots" (*Anchorage Daily News* 2004, B1). Economic development motives have not been adequately explored in the NIM literature.

Race, ethnicity, and culture factored into a significant number of NIMs. In some cases, it is wealthy whites seeking to sequester themselves from other races, religions, or income levels, as might be expected from the literature. South Blooming Grove, NY, and Woodbury, NY, incorporated, at least in part, to stop the encroachment of a low-income Jewish population (Santos 2006). As previously discussed, the analysis likely underestimates the impact of race. The authors recognize some limitations to the media literature review approach (e.g., social mores might prevent some from stating their real reason for incorporation if it involved race, income, or private benefit).

Other less influential factors emerged from the newspaper analysis. These include the desire to increase the community's political clout; asset capture, or the desire to use revenues from key local resources such as a shopping mall or nuclear power plant; a cluster effect, or the influence of other new incorporated cities inspiring further incorporations; and ordinance or design codes, which can overlap at times with the growth control/land use/zoning category. Some communities incorporated in part to avoid ordinances and design codes: "We're here because we don't want rules" said a council member (Kollin 2001, 1).

Additional factors included a desire to avoid environmental laws such as erosion control laws or endangered species provisions, a desire for lower property taxes and, alternatively, a desire to increase property values. In at least two cases, the primary reason to create a new city appeared to involve individual personal gain. For example, Creola, LA, incorporated to allow its sole convenience store owner (also the owner of the vast majority of land in the town) to sell liquor (Advocate 2000). State laws requiring annexation or incorporation or easing of incorporation provisions influenced incorporations. And though of minimal influence, other reasons for incorporation included desire to control water supply or water rights, historic preservation, tourism, and avoidance of state control.

The disaggregation of factors cited by the actors involved confirms some of the major theories and it introduces new ones as well. Though the literature was accurate, it was incomplete. Twelve new factors were identified from the newspaper analysis (see Table 3). Seven of those factors, discussed below, each influenced over 10 percent of the NIMs created, including (1) rural character/community identity; (2) control of community revenues; (3) dissatisfaction with county governance; (4) eligibility for government funds, especially grants; (5) economic development; (6) desire to avoid county ordinances or design codes, and (7) desire to avoid environmental restrictions. The other five new factors were less influential but still relevant.

Table 3. Factors Identified from Literature and Media Review.

Factors Previously Identified in Literature	New Factors Revealed in Content Analysis
Service provision	Rural character/community identity
Annexation threats	Control over community revenues
Population growth/ suburbanization	Dissatisfaction with county governance
Race	Eligibility for govt funds/grants
Lower taxes	Economic development
Land use control/growth	Ordinances/design codes
Clustering	Environmental laws
Protect property values	Profit motive for majority landowner
State laws	Water rights or supply
Boundary entrepreneurs	Direct state control
Asset capture	Historic preservation
Strong state/county roles	
Low property tax limitations	
Wealth/median housing value	

Certain factors addressed in the literature, such as the influence of state law or the statistical role of wealth/income, did not surface prominently in the content analysis. This in itself yields an important insight—the difference between macromotives and micromotives. *Macromotives*, as defined here, indicates the underlying variables that set the playing field for incorporations—such as the leniency or stringency of a state's annexation and incorporation laws, or the income level of the incorporating community, relative strength of state/county roles, parameters for property tax limitations, and so on. *Micromotives*, as defined here, refers to the immediate circumstances that inspire an individual community to incorporate, such as threat of annexation, undesirable growth, or the desire to become eligible for grant funding. Theoretically oriented studies appear more likely to identify macromotives because underlying factors tend to be structural patterns over time that predicts behavior. As a result, macromotives tend to overlook immediate causes and specific reasons that may be just as relevant but not as systemic or consistent.

The media analysis, on the other hand, excels at identifying micromotives. Journalists conduct a different type of research that is more grounded. The facts and evidence gathered inform the motivating factors. Hence, reasons that are not repetitive or similar to factors in similar events are allowed to emerge.

This is not to say that macromotives and micromotives cannot coexist. A situation may have causal factors operating simultaneously such as the macromotive of asset capture to lower taxes along with the micromotive of incorporating to prevent annexation. In summary, by synthesizing these two levels of analysis, the authors are the first to emerge with a more

Table 4. Typology of Theories Explaining Municipal Incorporation 1950–2010.

Category	Description	Factor Count
Spatially driven municipalities	Growth control/land use, maintain rural characteristics, ordinance/design code, environmental concerns/laws	67
Politically driven municipalities	Annexation, dissatisfaction with county, political clout, state law, exit state control	62
Economic or fiscally driven municipalities	Asset capture, lower property taxes, water supply, single owner profit, increase property value, tourism	54
Service driven municipalities	Services	24
Sociologically driven municipalities	Race/ethnicity/cultural, historical preservation	9
Cluster-driven municipalities	Influence of other NIMs	5

Note: NIMs = newly incorporated municipalities.

comprehensive set of factors explaining new municipal formation that has not been compiled before.

A Typology of Theories on Municipal Incorporation

The perspectives that shape theories on municipal formation provide a premise around which a classification can be built. When the twenty-two factors uncovered in the content analysis are grouped with the factors revealed by the literature review, we are able to form a classification of municipal incorporation formation theories and the frequency with which they were cited (see Table 4). Each category within the typology has specific examples cited in the previous section. For example, Bedias, TX, was cited as a NIM that incorporated to be eligible for government funding for a water/sewer system. This is included under economic or fiscally driven municipalities.

The development of this typology is important to the study of municipal incorporations because it provides an analytical framework that, heretofore, did not exist. For inquiries into why municipal incorporations form, this typology serves as a "Gestalt, mapping out the terrain and potential routes to travel" (Thomas 2011, 511). The subject of municipal incorporations can now be studied through the subclassifications of incorporations or in its entirety noting the comprehensive, rich, complex interplay of factors.

The typology does not simply reorganize the literature, it deeply informs it. As noted earlier, service-driven discussions often dominate the discourse on why municipalities are created. This schemata reveals that spatial reasons rather than services, particularly land-use and growth control, lead the way in explaining why new jurisdictions form. This, in turn, impacts, informs, and highlights the role of planners, as they are responsible for the most important motivation driving the creation of new municipalities. The land use, zoning, ordinance and design codes formulated by planners also affect adjoining and nearby municipalities or counties causing planners to face intra- and intermunicipal issues.

Finally, the typology serves the purpose of establishing benchmarks for future inquiry. There has been a significant decline in the rate of new municipalities (Waldner, Rice, and Smith 2013). Based on reasons provided over the past twenty years, land-use and spatial factors emerged as the most important factors. Will the same reasons continue to dominate or as growth trends occur in more densely populated areas of the city, will economic and fiscal reasons or other reasons become more important? This classification allows us to address this and other questions on municipal incorporations.

Conclusion

Why do new municipalities form? In this review, we combine a traditional literature review with an innovative use of a media literature review focusing on newspaper analysis as a form of grounded theoretical review. The results permit a broader and more complete overview of factors that inform why boundary changes in the form of municipal incorporation occur. Previous scholarly explanations provided a correct, but markedly incomplete picture of the factors that stimulate NIMs.

The literature review identified the major theories that explain why municipalities form. Explanations were often influenced by a particular perspective; for example, a politically oriented perspective looked at the strictness of state laws, a sociologically perspective looked at race and income, and so forth. Theories explored in the literature review were more reflective of macromotives—that is, researchers uncovering underlying influences and describing and formulating variables and motivations from a broader viewpoint. Tiebout's theory of services motivating consumer-voters to leave one municipality to move to or form another municipality is a prime example of a macromotive explanation that derived from a broad overview of all the factors involved in consumers choosing a neighborhood in which to live. While services would be identified as a reason in newspaper articles, it is unlikely that the theory of an efficient number of municipalities would emerge from reasons provided in a newspaper article.

While the traditional literature review and its macromotive approach lay the foundation for explaining why municipalities incorporate, this review sought an innovative way to identify distinct factors. By conducting a media literature review focusing on newspaper article analysis, a form of grounded theory evolved. Twenty-two separate and distinct factors were identified as both

primary and/or influential factors and within these, twelve were new factors that had not been identified in the traditional literature review. New factors included eligibility for government grants, economic development, maintenance of rural character or identity, ordinances and design codes, individual profit motive, utility rights, control over community resources and so forth. The newspaper analysis identified reasons that were considered micromotives; that is, immediate reasons identified by individual communities that inspired them to incorporate; for example, profit motive, positioning to apply for grants, economic development, and so forth. These reasons are valid but not necessarily underlying or systemic and, hence, do not easily lend themselves to theoretical constructs.

Together, the literature review and the newspaper review force us to revisit our fundamental understandings of municipal incorporation. For the first time ever, we are able to put factors into a context that inform why municipalities incorporate. The identified factors are not equally important; rather, some play a more prominent role. Spatial considerations, closely followed by political and economic considerations appear to be the dominant reasons as to why municipalities incorporate. In general, the results indicate that municipal incorporation events are often the byproduct of reactionary forces (response to threat of annexation, defensive incorporation, response to unwanted land-use development, and response to higher property taxes) rather than proactive events to provide an unincorporated territory with local governance in the name of democracy and the greater good. This conclusion comes in spite of the scholarly literature's focus on services (the public choice theory). Services are surprisingly not the predominant motive for the majority of municipal incorporations.

The typology adds context to our understanding of municipal incorporations. Spatial considerations remain important; therefore, we should expect the growth of municipal incorporations to continue in areas that have issues around land use or controlling growth or in rural areas that find a need to retain their local community identity. We can also expect innovative forms of government such as special districts and POAs that arose in response to zoning and control over growth issues, to continue to grow and be future areas of research. Following the second and third most cited reasons, perhaps we can expect the creation of municipalities in densely populated urban areas where there are threats of annexation or competitive struggles for capturing of assets. The typology provided in this article emphasizes the role of planners as they formulate the land-use, growth control, zoning and design codes that emerge as new cities form and as they deal with the impact on surrounding jurisdictions. The literature review and the typology developed from a combination of a literature and media review lays the foundation for us to better explain what motivates municipal incorporation and the subsequent implications and impacts on our society and environment.

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