THE IMPACT OF THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE PREDOMINANTLY BLACK COMMUNITY OF SCOTLANDVILLE

YJUSEF JAHAN
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

I. THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of the legal prohibition of the creation of new municipal governments in East Baton Rouge Parish, particularly as it relates to social development, political awareness, and political participation of people living in the predominantly black community of Scotlandville.

According to the charter of the East Baton Rouge plan of government adopted August 12, 1947 effective January 1, 1949, in East Baton Rouge Parish, no new incorporated areas are permissible. The charter recognized the prior incorporation of three areas: Zachary, Baker, and Baton Rouge, the capital city.

At present time Scotlandville, a black concentrated area located outside the city limits, is deprived of use of some municipal and public services which normally are provided to populations living within an incorporated area. Also located in Scotlandville is the largest black institution of higher learning in America, excluding Southern University, in population sense, Scotlandville is already almost twice as large as the two incorporated areas in the Parish combined, Zachary and Baker. Thus Scotlandville despite its population growth finds itself unable to become a part of the city of Baton Rouge or to incorporate as a separate municipality.

This set of circumstances seems to have a negative impact on citizens' political awareness, the level of political participation and social development of the Scotlandville community.

1 The Plan of Government of the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of Baton Rouge.
If this residential area had its own local government, more social and political awareness as well as community involvement could be expected. The creation of a local self-government, a representative body responsible and responsive to the immediate needs, desires, and expectations of the black population would stimulate and encourage the people to get involved in community problems and to be more concerned about their political, social, and economic environments.

A local self-government would play an interlocking role in Scotlandville by connecting the university to the community and to the local government. One of the grievances presented intermittently by the Southern University students has been the allegation that the university community remained isolated from the rest of the community and has refrained from acquainting and involving itself with the problems of Scotlandville residents.

If a local government existed in Scotlandville, university faculty and staff members as residents of the area, would be connected in a variety of ways with the community and consequently the university's involvement would be greater and more relevant.

The presence of local self-government in a community increases the rate and level of communication between the governing body and the local people; consequently, the public officials will be known to the citizens and thus process itself functions as a reservoir leading to greater involvement and participation in public affairs.

Findings from the behavioral sciences suggest that the saliency of and interest in social and political issues for members of a group increases in proportion to the extent that the proponents of the various sides of the issue are personally known to members of the group. Loyalty to fellow group members promotes greater involvement in the issue and a greater level of political participation.¹

Generally, "the more political stimuli received by a person, the more likely he is to be active in politics." In addition, "people who participate in politics in one way are likely to do so in another; and there is roughly an increasing order of participation from active campaigning for one's candidate, to reading about and talking politics, to being interested, to voting.\(^2\) Considering the foregoing discussion, it seems that because of the absence of local government interest in, knowledge about, and involvement in political issues remains low political among the citizens, participation is less in Scotlandville than it is normally expected to be, from a community of this size and nature.

II Description of Scotlandville Community

Scotlandville is located in East Baton Rouge Parish about five miles north of the central business district of the city of Baton Rouge. It is an unincorporated area of industrial and suburban development and is a self-contained area, isolated geographically and to a considerable extent culturally, from the city of Baton Rouge.

According to the 1970 Census the total population of the state of Louisiana was 3,345,100 of which 3,341,223 or 70% were white and 1,033,699 or 30% were black and 15,000 belonged to other races. The 1970 Census revealed that of 229,137 total population of East Baton Rouge Parish, 222,525 or 79% were white and 31,012 or 29% were black and 300 persons belonged to some other races. The population of the city of Baton Rouge amounted to 135,935 of which 119,129 or about 72% were white and 43,193 or 28% were black. The total population of Scotlandville according to the 1970 Census was 22,557 of which July 1, 350 or 0.2% were white and the rest of the


\(^2\)Berelson and Steiner, Jr, *Alt,*, p. 422.
Population numbers to 20,537 or 91.3% were black, of whom more than 32 per cent were 13 years and older and more than 5% per cent between the ages of 19 and 34. According to 1950 Census the population of Scotlandville was 18,455 of whom 13,576 or 20 per cent were white and 14,579 or 30 per cent were black. It means that within one decade the racial imbalance has intensified by more than 11 per cent, that is to say a 50% decrease in the white population. The present population of Scotlandville amounts to more than 21,000.

To a certain extent, Scotlandville has its own cultural distinctiveness which has emerged as a result of its unique experiences in a Southern setting and its racial homogeneity. A study made by Hodjeski and Masters for the purpose of preparing a report relative to the extension of Interstate 110 through Scotlandville, revealed that there was "a strong sense of community in Scotlandville which is continuously reinforced by the overwhelming factor of its racial homogeneity." According to this report, if given the opportunity to leave Scotlandville, less than 20 per cent of the interviewed residents indicated that they would do so and 97.5 per cent believed that Scotlandville was a good place to live. This is evidently a combined function of economic independence, long term residence, racial security and kinship ties. The authors go on to say that the "Statistical evidence indicates that Scotlandville is a stable community with multi-bonded relationships within a general homogeneous population." Later studies by Steptoe and Joister supported the above contention. They believe "there are few factors contributing to out-migration." They emphasized that "only 12% of the household heads (out of 210) or less than 7 per cent expressed some degree of willingness to move outside the area.""}

For years the people of Scotlandville have been complaining about the low
calibre municipal services, employment opportunities, recreational facilities;
public transportation, housing conditions, police protection, lighting, street
cleaning and the general appearance of the area.

A major portion of the residential areas of Scotlandville, especially the
low income areas, have problems of different varieties. In some areas play space
for children does not exist, the streets are narrow and unpaved and a good number
of them are dead ends. Houses are set close to streets, ditches are open, dirty
and unsanitary. The area possesses a poor drainage system which results in flooding
when heavy rains occur. Although about 50 per cent of the people of Scotlandville
owned no automobiles and have to use the public transportation system, the study by
Stephens and Oxley revealed that in the first phase of their study which began in
September, 1970, "most of the vehicles (buses) were noticeably unreliable and unsafe;
the service was unreliable, inconvenient, uncomfortable, and unsafe." 1

The people of Scotlandville pay taxes for three services provided by the
East Baton Rouge Parish. The services are fire protection, street lighting, and
garbage collection.

Although the feeling among many residents of the community is that these
services are very much inadequate, in the absence of concerted community action
little has been done to improve the quality of these services. The Scotlandville
fire protection is an example. The Scotlandville fire protection district used
to tax at 10 mill limitation on a property assessment of slightly over $14,000,000
and received $142,770 in 1971.

1 The first phase of the project was completed in the summer of 1971. It
investigated the demand for bus transit and its recommendation for a greatly expanded
transit service was almost completely adopted by the local transit authority. The
second phase was an evaluation of the new service, and proposed further transit
improvement. "Stephens, op. cit., pp. 1, 3, and 5"
In November, 1972 election, Amendment Number 23 was proposed to all in the district to levy up to an additional five mills with voter approval. Fifty percent of the additional levy would be dedicated to pay salaries of the persons. This amendment, which required East Baton Rouge Parish as well as state wide approval, was voted down as had been the case in 1970. However, in 1975 the amendment was passed locally, but rejected statewide. In 1972 the amendment was defeated by a mere 37 votes, 31,755 voted for the fire protection district tax proposal and 31,792 voted against.

The Public Affairs Research Council, supporting the amendment, stated that property assessments have not been increased sufficiently within the Scotlandville Fire Protection District to keep pace with inflation and continually rising costs. All present equipment is at least 15 years old, and much of it is in need of replacement. The salaries of the employees of the district are well below that of other persons employed in the same or similar jobs in the Baton Rouge area. Unless some additional revenue sources are found, it will be difficult to keep equipment current and well maintained and almost impossible to give pay increases to the 27 employees at the district. Ten of the 27 employees are paid with federal funds.

Since the 10 mills property tax has expired in 1975, therefore, in April 1975, the residents of Scotlandville were called to vote on two propositions. One proposition called for the renewal of the current 10 mills property tax and the other called for an additional five mills that would be collected for 10 years beginning 1975. The extra five mills would generate $120,000 annually and would enable the fire protection district to continue services at their present level.

1. State Times, November 3, 1972
3. Louisiana Advocate, April 2, 1975
On Tuesday, April 9, 1975 the Scotlandville area voters approved a tax measure. Proposition number two, raising the sales tax for another ten years, the current 10 cents on the dollar assessment carried 1,774 votes for and 134 against. And Proposition number one, about the extra five cents was approved by 1,720. Only 135 voters voted against.

Complaints about the problems of police protection has gained place among the people of Scotlandville. A study by Dr. John Holland, Director of Southern University Center for Social Research, revealed that in five black pockets in the city of Baton Rouge, including Scotlandville, only 10 percent of the black residents feel that blacks are treated as fairly as whites by the police department. Dr. Holland concludes that "the greater the difference is between the feelings of black and white respondents the greater the distance between them and the more sharply differentiated the in-group-out-group relationship." 1

Early in January 1975 the newly elected East Baton Rouge Sheriff, J. Amue, announced that he, and Mayor-President Dugan, recommended a branch office of the sheriff's department to be established in the Scotlandville area. Recognizing the community feeling, the Sheriff said, "he thinks the Scotlandville residents prefer to have predominantly black deputies working out of the branch office and said he intends to keep this in mind while making personnel assignments." He pointed out that Scotlandville, with some 22,000 residents, is larger than both Juker and Zachary. 2 Meaning that this area also needs police protection. Shortly

1 Louisiana Advocate, April 9, 1975.
3 Louisiana Advocate, January 10, 1975.
after the announcement a branch office of Sheriff's Department was established in Scotlandville, and as the Sheriff had promised, mostly black deputies were appointed to serve at that branch.

An additional point relative to the stability of residents of the Scotlandville community is that of homeownership. Although the median annual income of the people of Scotlandville is $500, about 92% of that in Baton Rouge, the percentage of homeownership is nearly equal, and according to Stephey and Poister 50 per cent of those interviewed owned their homes and 51 per cent were buying their house. The above home owning level has been "significantly influenced by the fact that 20% of the applicable household-head participants in the labor force are professional workers mostly university and public school teachers." Even as early as 1940, about half of the 703 black respondents residing in Scotlandville stated that they owned their homes. 2

III. The Statement of the Problems

In 1943, some concerned citizens made the first attempt to incorporate Scotlandville. True, the desire for establishing a local self-government never died down, but the next serious attempt started more than 20 years later in 1970, and still is continuing. Although since 1972, Scotlandville is represented in the 12 members of East Baton Rouge Council by a councilman, nevertheless a good number of residents are not satisfied and they claim that the Parish Government is not too much interested in listening to the people of Scotlandville and finding out what could be done to give some relief to the immediate needs of the residents, and to tackle the many other complicated problems which long are over due.

1. About 33% of household heads are full-time workers and about 22% are either retired, disabled, or unemployed and have an income that is less than the median. Stephey, op cit., p 5

The creation of a new incorporated place in East Baton Rouge Parish had some legal problems which should have been solved first. The plan of government of the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the city of Baton Rouge, adopted August 12, 1947, effective January 1, 1949, in Section 1 of Chapter 1 (General Provision) prohibits the creation of new incorporated places by saying that "... the only incorporated city, town, or village shall be incorporated in East Baton Rouge. The only incorporated area recognized by that provision, besides the city of Baton Rouge, are the incorporated town of Zachary and the village of Baker" which of course, already existed.

Since no attempt was ever made to question the constitutionality of Article 1.05, therefore, the creation of a new incorporated area would have required changes in the Parish Charter through referendum. In order to incorporate, the unincorporated areas needed passage on from the voters to change the charter. This has proved not to be a simple question, especially for the people of Scotlandville.

The latest effort of some blacks concerned about Scotlandville, especially from the leaders of Second Ward Voters League has frustrated in February, 1972, General Election. The Amendment which has been placed on the ballot was designed to allow Scotlandville residents to decide whether they want to incorporate as a municipality outside of present city-parish government. It was defeated by 5,203 votes; 21,593 votes were in favor of incorporation and 20,390 voted against the proposal.

The defeated amendment was adding 11 amendments to be rejected by the voters in the referendum. Only three out of fourteen amendments were passed. Only 56 percent of the Parish voters had participated in the referendum to accept or reject the amendments in comparison to 92 percent response for the contest of...  

1. According to 1970 Census, Zachary has a population of 6,934 with 1,391 housing units. The population of Baker is 3,221 with 2,227 housing units. Scotlandville has 22,557 population with 5,975 housing units.

2. BATON JOURNAL, February 9, 1972.
the governorship in East Baton Rouge Parish. Out of 127,401 registered voters in East Baton Rouge Parish, 36,927 had voted on the governorship, and the most controversial amendment and the one which had attracted the most voter interest, was the one regarding the incorporation of Scotlandville. Even that amendment could not attract more than 54-55% of the parish voters to the poll. The participation on the part of Scotlandville residents was much lower.

During November, 1972 election, Amendment No. 29 was introduced to consolidate the city of Baton Rouge with the parish. The purpose of that amendment was to authorize complete consolidation of the governing bodies of the city of Baton Rouge and the East Baton Rouge Parish and to provide for the composition and the election of the consolidated council.

The consolidation plan was rejected by the voters. 12,451 voted for the proposal and 45,020 voted against it. Consolidation had been recommended by the 1930 plan of government study committee and the Baton Rouge Goals Congress. Unification has also been recommended in an organization and management study conducted for the city in 1971 by a national consulting firm. However, objections were raised among other things to the language of the proposed amendment placed before the voters and "Mayor-President Juhar campaigned against the amendment."

The result of the above series of events meant that Scotlandville could not be consolidated nor be incorporated. The apparent reasons for not allowing Scotlandville residents to begin steps toward forming their own municipality were several and the major ones were said to be as follows:


1. The plan of government study committee has "recommended a section dealing with the "urban area" be amended to include future urban area. The future area to a large extent, paralleled the consolidated school district and includes Scotlandville."

Furthermore, the county council had suggested expanding the city to take in the entire parish. But the council deferred action on those proposals and instructed the planning commission to make recommendations for the orderly annexation of the populated areas of the parish to the city of Baton Rouge.

It means that there is some plan to annex the parish areas including Scotlandville, with the city within the foreseeable future, and the incorporation of Scotlandville would prevent the consolidation of governmental activities as the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce recalled.

2. Another argument against the incorporation was that Scotlandville was not capable of raising enough local taxes to support the cost of public services. It was claimed that "the area is a densely populated area with low assessment and low income but requiring costly services." A report by Finance Director, Bert Roussel, stated that about $97,000 in revenue was possible for "Scotlandville's 25,922 residents, or about $3.60 per resident." The 1971 budget of Baton Rouge required $11.42 per inhabitant. For cities of populations approximately Scotlandville's, Alexandria, required $5.05 per capita; Bossier City, $11.11; Gretna, $7.79; Houma, $5.53; and New Iberia, $7.98. The report went on to say that "Scotlandville area residents are already paying 10%; bills for three special districts, fire protection, garbage collection and street lighting" in incorporation as a municipality.

1. HORNE, EVAGAT, January 24, 1972

2. Ibid.
THE RESIDENTS MAY NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, WHICH THEY HAVE NOW FOR THE DISTRICTS ASSESSMENT."

Judging attorney Fred Benton had stated that "with a debt limitation of 16 per cent of the assessed valuation of $15,000,000 the new municipality, if formed, could be able to issue only $1.5 million in bonds for capital improvements or other purposes."

3. THE BOARD OF CHEROKEE APPEALED THE INCORPORATION PLAN ALONG OTHER THINGS ON THE GROUNDS THAT "THE AREA OF SCOTLANDVILLE AS OUTLINED IN THE AMENDMENT LANGUAGE HAS NOT SPECIFICALLY DETERMINED BY BOUNDARY AND ALL TOGETHER IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE POWERFUL SECTIONS OF EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH HERE AND STILL ARE AGAINST THE INCORPORATION OF SCOTLANDVILLE MENTIONING RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY VARIETY OF REASONS TO JUSTIFY THEIR POSITION.

IN ANSWER TO THE ABOVE, PERHAPS SOME CONCERNED CITIZENS OF SCOTLANDVILLE RAISED THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS:

1. First, in 1943 the people in Scotlandville filed a petition with enough signatures asking the governor to take action for the incorporation of Scotlandville. The petition was ignored and the new charter of East Baton Rouge plan of government was adopted in August 1947 instead, with Article 108 which prohibited any new incorporation.

Secondly, there are a good number of parishes in the state of Louisiana with fewer population than the East Baton Rouge Parish, but have more incorporated places. Terrebonne and East Feliciana Parishes are some examples, the first one with a population of about 25,000 has 5 incorporated places and the second one with 42,000 has 6, whereas the East Baton Rouge Parish with about 240,000 population have only 3 incorporated areas.

[Page 15]
3. Thirdly, areas with very small population, such as the Village of Wood in the Parish of Madison with only 78 persons and the Town of Mount Lebanon in the Parish of Dickville with 102 population are incorporated. They have mayor, marshall, and alderman, therefore it is not easy to understand why Scotlandville with 26,000 population could not have its own local government.

4. Thus far Scotlandville is not incorporated within the city limits they pointed out, since the "Council would not let them in, let them do their own thing." 2

5. Scotlandville is denied many of municipal services, and creation of a municipality is not going to null the situation either. They claim that Scotlandville not only could receive a disproportionate share of Parish revenue but also could get federal funds.

6. About the revenue and the loss of homestead exemptions, Ace Belton, a long time resident and the President of Second Ward Voters League claimed that Scotlandville, "If incorporated, the 15 mills presently paid for fire protection, street lighting, and garbage collection would be discontinued and a seven mill municipal tax would be paid instead. Property owners would lose their homestead exemptions signed only for the above mentioned special district. This, by no means, applies to homestead exemptions signed for sanitary sewerage, East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, drainage, major street programs for the standard homestead exemptions. 3 According to Belton, true the people would lose homestead exemptions after incorporation, but they would pay less taxes. Because a property with $12,000 assessment after $22,000 homestead exemption at the present ...


2. Hammond Advocate, January 30, 1972

The property tax on the remaining $70,000 would be $152.00, but after incorporation the same property would be taxed at $13,000, so the total amount of tax would be $24,000, a saving of $23.00 for the property owner.

Finally, although no black residents had openly opposed the question, some of them privately believed that was another reason to oppose the incorporation of Scotlandville. It is that the white political power structure did not want to see the incorporation of a densely populated black area just a few miles from the capital city. To be sure, they clamed every possible device and excuses were used to prevent the creation of a local self-government of blacks, for blacks and by blacks. Although this charge could not be substantiated, but there were some indications that there might have been some justification for this claim.

So, Scotlandville remained unincorporated, with no local self-government, and no meaningful political participation on the part of the people, either in the policy making process or in the selection of local officials. Therefore, true more than 20 percent of the population are professionals and a good number of them highly educated, with great diversities of skills and knowledge; nevertheless because of the absence of local self-government the majority of community people remain apathetic to local conditions and to questions related to political issues.

In order to clarify the above contention, the voters turned out on three different local issues would be examined. The first issue was a referendum, in February 1972, on the removal of the so-called Article 1-09. As mentioned earlier, the amendment to get away with that Article was defeated by 1,000 votes, which meant that Scotlandville could not incorporate. Thus, this question seemed to be a very important local issue, but since the people did not exactly know the nature of the question and its relevancy to their daily lives, therefore a great apathy was shown towards this issue. Of total eligible voters, less than 20 percent of the citizens of Scotlandville participated in the referendum.
A few months later, in November 1972, the people of Scotlandville were called for the first time, to vote for the election of a councilman to represent Scotlandville in the Parish Council. The voters' turnout almost doubled, and more than 50 per cent of the eligible voters participated in the election. It looked like that this time the people were more aware of the significance of the issue and a good number of them did not remain apathetic and on the contrary took an active part in the local political process.

The third issue was a referendum, in April 1975, on the two related questions, the extension of the life of fire protection district and the adoption of an additional 5 mills tax to subsidize that district. Although true it seemed that all residents had a stake to be concerned about the fire protection district, but once again a great apathy was shown towards this question and the number of voters participating in the referendum dropped to less than 25 per cent.

Here is the result of the community voting on these three questions. The number of eligible voters in Scotlandville in 1933 was about 15,000 of whom no more than 40 per cent or 5,011 had registered. By 1972, the number of eligible voters had increased to 14,000 and the registered voters to 3,935 an increase of more than 20 per cent in the number of registered voters. The number more or less remained the same in February 1975 election.

In the February election of 1972, on the proposition number one, which was a vote to amend Article 1:05, a total of 2,073 votes were cast by the people of Scotlandville, 1,565 votes were in favor of the proposition and 508 votes were against. It means that less than 25 per cent of the registered voters participated.

1. This came about as a consequence of reapportionment according to which Ward 2 including Scotlandville became entitled to have a representative in the City-Parish Council.
IN THE REFERENDUM

Alice Belton from the Second Ward Voters League had invited the residence to a mass meeting on Monday evening, January 31, 1972, the day before the election, to explain to them among other things, the proposition number one. According to her, a few hundred showed up at the meeting and the people generally remained apathetic to this major question.

In the general election of November, 1972 in which for the first time, Scottsville became entitled to have a councilman of its own, a total of 4,332 voters participated in the election, a 50 per cent increase in the level of political participation since the February election of the same year.

In the April, 1975 referendum on the question of fire protection district, a total of 1,902 voters participated. 1,773 voted in favor and 129 voted against. It means that less than 25 per cent of the eligible voters actually went to the poll. Although the measure was approved by overwhelming majority, but once again the low turnout disappointed some community leaders.

A glance to the number of votes cast on those three local issues clearly indicate that in two of them the level of political participation was well below average and was less than 25 per cent. The exception was the election of the councilman in which the number of voters doubled. Two explanations could be given for the unusual turnout for councilman election.

First, there was a very serious competition among black candidates in order to get elected. Since they had a personal stake in the outcome of the election, therefore they tried their best to encourage the voters to go to the poll and used persuasive arguments during campaign and even provided the means of transportation to facilitate voting. Therefore as a consequence of that competition a larger

1 Interview with Alice Belton, the President of Second Ward Voters League, April 1975

2 Record from East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of the Court House

THE DREAM OF CONCERNED CITIZENS OF SCOTLANDVILLE TO HAVE A LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT MAY COME TRUE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA WHICH HAD BEEN ADOPTED IN 1921, THE LONGEST OF ALL CONSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, WAS REPLACED BY A NEW ONE, THAT IS TO SAY THE PEOPLE OF LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 29, 1974, BY A 2-1 MARGIN VOTES FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION. IN THE NEW DOCUMENT, HOME RULE POWER IS GIVEN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IF THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE OF A TOWN OR A PARISH DESIRE TO DO SO. FURTHERMORE, THE LEGISLATURE IS PROHIBITED FROM ADOPTING SPECIFIC LAWS AIMED AT A PARTICULAR PARISH OR CITY. IT MEANS THAT ARTICLE 105 OF THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH GOVERNMENT NO LONGER STANDS, AND THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLANDVILLE OR ANY OTHER PLACES, FOR THAT MATTER, ARE FREE TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE INCLUSION OF SOME OF THESE PROVISIONS ARE PARTLY DUE TO THE ENDEAVORS OF BLACK REPRESENTATIVES IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WHO WERE AWARE ABOUT SCOTLANDVILLE PROBLEMS.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE FUTURE STATUS OF SCOTLANDVILLE, ESPECIALLY WHETHER IT IS TO BE ANNEXED TO THE CITY OF BATON ROUGE, INTEGRATE AS A SEPARATE MUNICIPALITY OR REMAIN IN ITS PRESENT STATE, MIGHT WELL BE RELATED TO OR A FUNCTION OF THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL AWARENESS OF ITS RESIDENTS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THEIR COMMUNITY, THE PARISH AND STATE. IT SEEMS THAT

THE INCORPORATION OF SCOTLANDVILLE COULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT NOT ONLY ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, BUT ON THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH AS A WHOLE AND THE CITY OF BATON ROUGE IN PARTICULAR.


TO SOME EXTENT THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH POLITICAL STRUCTURE HAS RECOGNIZED THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SCOTLANDVILLE AREA IN THAT IT HAS GRANTED RESIDENTS A VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE, A SHERIFF DEPARTMENT UNIT, AND A PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCH. ¹

SCOTLANDVILLE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT COULD BE A STARTING POINT TO HAVE THE COMMUNITY INTO A MORE PROMISING FUTURE, AS A FUNCTION OF INCREASED SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AWARENESS AS WELL AS POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. IN EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, HISTORICALLY BLACKS HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATED IN FIVE DISTRICT AREAS. THESE AREAS ARE THE SUBCOMMUNITIES OF SCOTLANDVILLE, EDDIE PARK, SOUTH BATON ROUGE, THE LAKE AREA, AND ZION CITY. SCOTLANDVILLE WITH ABOUT 23,000 POPULATION OF WHICH MORE THAN 90% ARE BLACK IS, NOT ONLY THE LARGEST SUBCOMMUNITY IN BATON ROUGE PARISH, BUT ALSO HAS THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING THE LOCATION OF SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY. THEREFORE, SCOTLANDVILLE SEEMS TO HAVE BOTH THE MAN-POWER AND THE BRAIN-POWER TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO TAKE CARE OF PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

PROBABLY THE PROBLEMS FACING SCOTLANDVILLE ARE THE EXISTENCE OF SOME DEGREE OF APATHY AND THE LACK OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONCERN AND AWARENESS, RESULTING FROM THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

¹The Scotlandville Branch of Public Library was opened July 1, 1974, on 1400 Harding Blvd. with about 1,000 books and has 2 staff members.
SUMMARY

The position set forth in the paper is that the absence of local self-government in Scotlandville, a predominantly black community, has promoted the development of some feelings of apathy as well as limited social and political awareness and concern.

The presence of local self-government in a community, especially of a racial minority, among other advantages, increases the rate and level of communication between the governing body and the local people. Consequently, the saliency of and interest in social and political issues for members of the community will increase in proportion to the extent that the proponents of the various sides of the issues are personally known to members of the community. Thus, it is suggested that as the result of the absence of local self-government (1) interest in, knowledge about, and involvement in social and political issues in Scotlandville is less than that expected of a community of this size and nature; (2) feelings of apathy are greater; and (3) political participation is less than it would be if local self-government existed.
Bibliography


U.S. Census, 1930.


STATE TIMES (Evening Paper), Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Morning Advocate (Morning Paper), Baton Rouge, Louisiana.


ORDERS IN REGARD TO THE SECOND PARISH VOTERS LEAGUE, by Alec J. Belton (President), January, 1974, Baton Rouge (Scotlandville, Louisiana).

Records from East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of the Court House.

Records from East Baton Rouge Parish (Proposition No. 1).

The Plan of Government of the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of Baton Rouge.