

Introduction

❖ Hispanics and Latinos are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States (Dehm and Iceland 2017), but especially in the South. Limestone and Madison Counties in Alabama are currently experiencing this. This fast-growing community is plagued by high poverty rates far above other groups in the region. This population has grown so fast that this ethnic group is now the third largest ethnic group in these counties. This project seeks to examine how this rapidly growing population is faring in two Alabama counties.

Research Question

❖ What causal factors are contributing to the high rate of poverty in Hispanics/Latinos in Limestone and Madison County, especially when compared to Whites and Blacks in the same counties.

Location of Limestone County and Madison County in Alabama

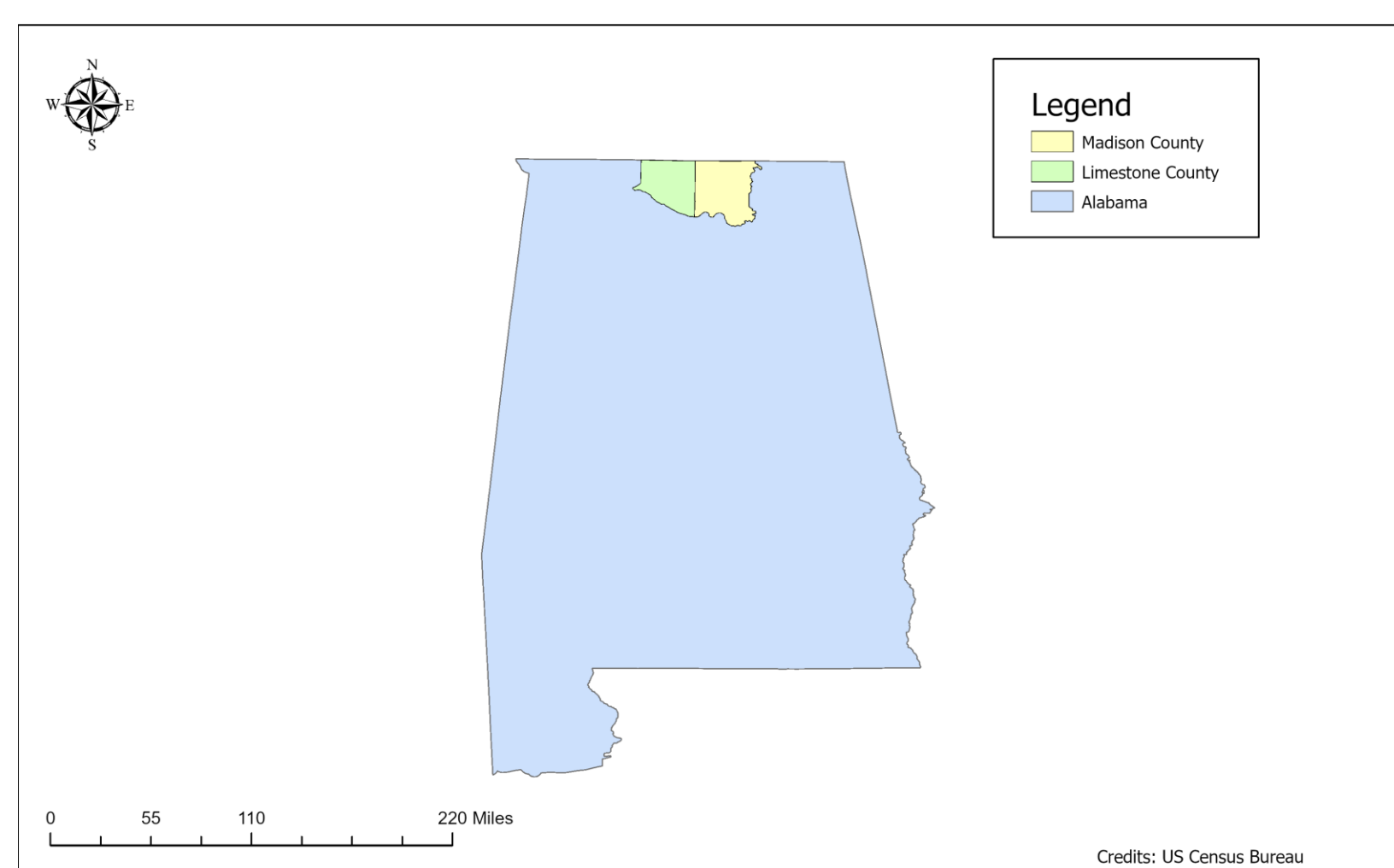


Figure 1

Purpose of the Study

❖ The purpose of this study is to discover how these factors differ from the broader population that contribute to this cause of high poverty rate while looking at socio-economic factors such as unemployment and educational attainment to see any connections. With this information we hope to find the answers to what is a major problem plaguing this new, fast-growing community.

Methodology

❖ Variables defined in this study are median household income by race, unemployment rate by race, poverty rate by race and highest educational attainment by race as these influence each other

❖ Data was collected from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates for the years 2015 – 2019

❖ Data on these key indicators was analyzed to compare across racial/ethnic group and between the two counties.

Results

Indicator 1: Income

- ❖ Hispanics in both counties earned less than Whites
- ❖ Hispanics in Madison county earned almost half of what Whites made
- ❖ Hispanics in Madison County earned more than Hispanics in Limestone County
- ❖ The income gap between Hispanics and Whites grew more every year in both counties
- ❖ African Americans earned more than Hispanics in Limestone County but slightly less more the same in Madison County

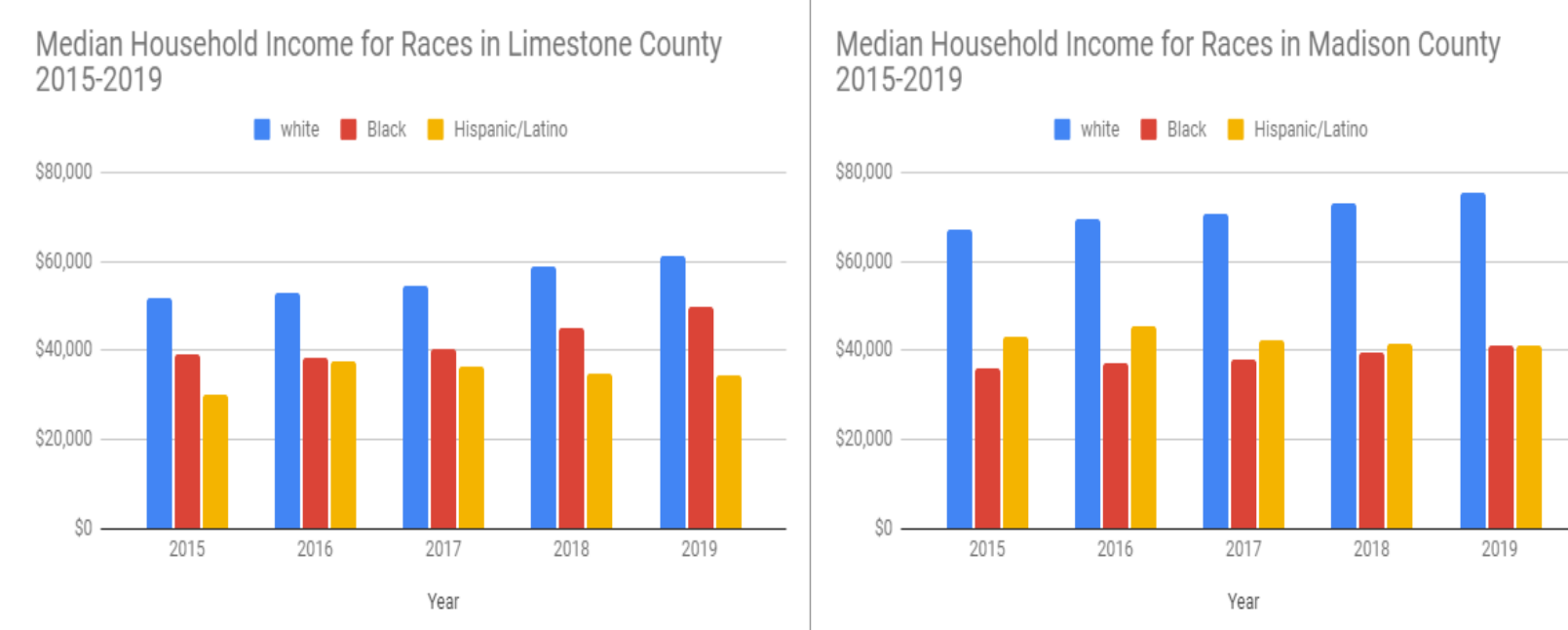


Figure 2 ACS 2015 - 2019

Indicator 2: Unemployment

- ❖ Unemployment for Hispanics was highest for all groups in both counties by 2019
- ❖ Hispanics in Madison county had the lowest unemployment from 2015 -2018 when whites fell below them

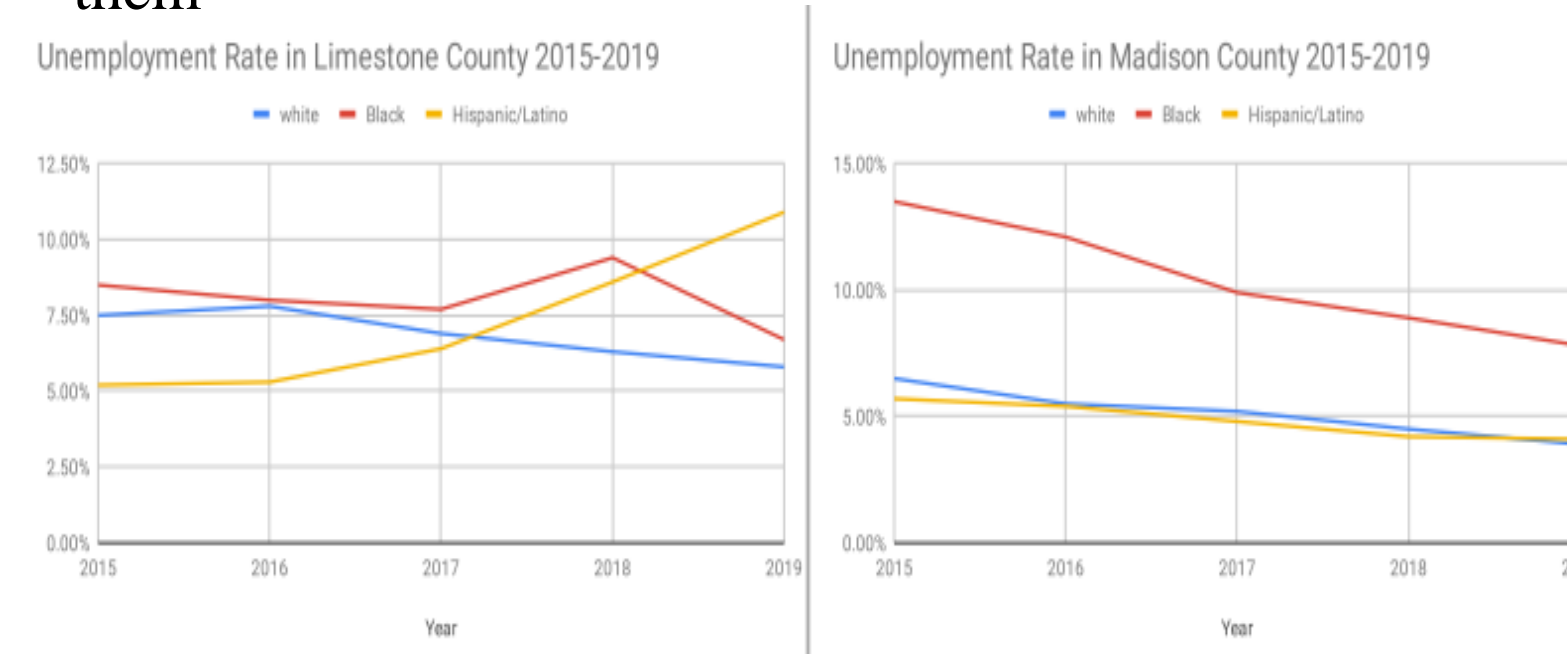


Figure 3 ACS 2015 - 2019

Indicator 3: Poverty

- ❖ Poverty levels stay relatively the same for both counties with the exception being in Limestone County in 2015 – 2016 when the poverty rate for Hispanics dropped by over 10 percent

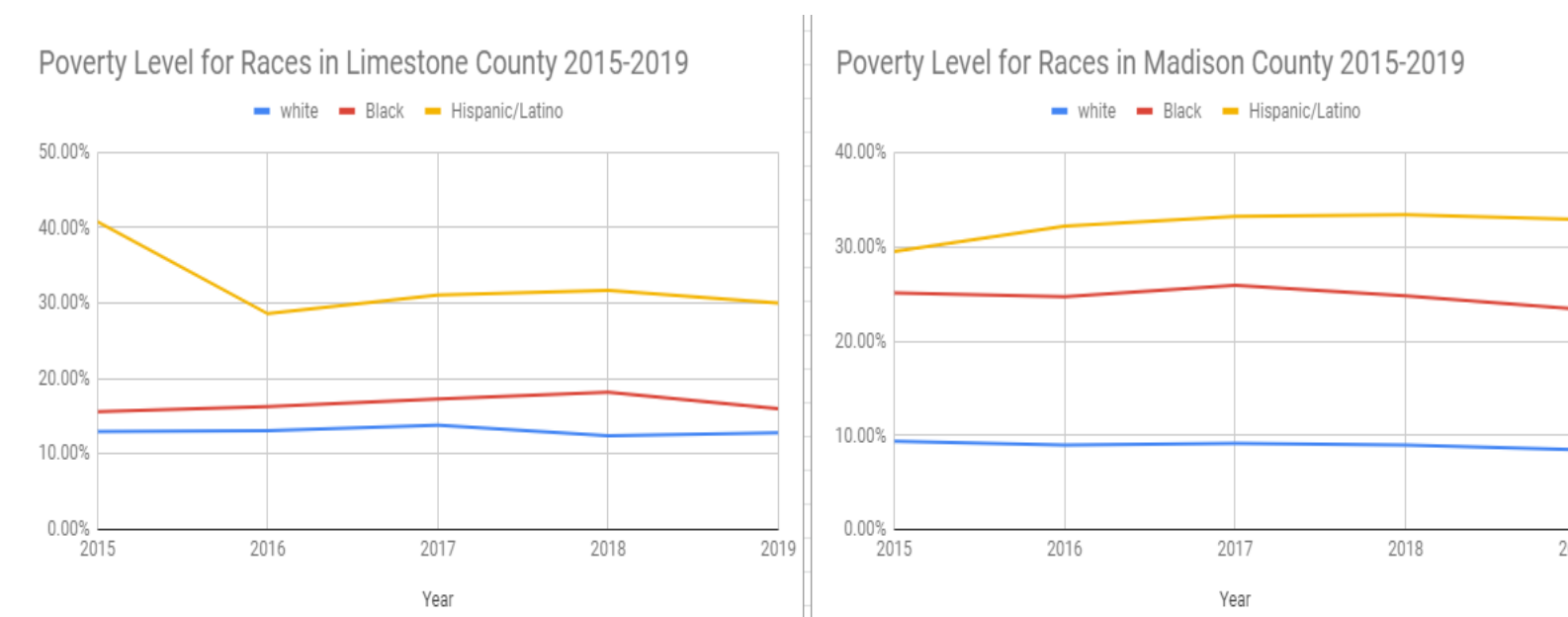


Figure 4 ACS 2015-2019

Indicator 4: Education

- ❖ Hispanics in both counties are more likely to less than a High School Diploma or GED than the other two racial groups
- ❖ Almost 3 in 10 Hispanic Males in Limestone County have less than a High School Diploma and 2 in 10 Hispanic Females in Limestone County have less than a High School Diploma
- ❖ Hispanics in Madison County are more educated than those in Limestone County

Educational attainment by percentage for Racial Groups by gender in Limestone County for 2019						
Level of Education	White Male	Black Male	Hispanic Male	White Female	Black Female	Hispanic Female
Less than High School Diploma	8.70%	14.30%	29.40%	7.50%	7.70%	20.30%
High School Diploma/ GED	18%	18.30%	9.80%	15.30%	11.60%	12.40%
Some College or Associates Degree	14.10%	11.10%	8.70%	15.40%	15%	9.70%
Bachelors Degree or Higher	13.80%	10.10%	3.80%	12.80%	11.40%	3.80%

Educational attainment by percentage for Racial Groups by gender in Madison County for 2019						
Level of Education	White Male	Black Male	Hispanic Male	White Female	Black Female	Hispanic Female
Less than High School Diploma	3.60%	8%	18.70%	3.20%	8.80%	12.40%
High School Diploma/ GED	8.90%	11.70%	10.80%	11.40%	11.50%	10.30%
Some College or Associates Degree	12.30%	13.80%	12.40%	15.30%	18.20%	9.70%
Bachelors Degree or Higher	24.30%	13.70%	12.80%	21.10%	19.30%	16.10%

Table 1 ACS 2019

Analysis and Conclusion

- ❖ Hispanics/Latinos in Limestone County and Madison County are experiencing extreme levels of poverty, low educational attainment when compared to Whites, stagnant income levels, and those in Limestone County experience high rates of unemployment. All data was collected pre-covid, the pandemic may have impacted many of these variables.
- ❖ Poverty Caused by Cumulative and Cyclical Interdependencies theory can help understand why poverty is so prevalent is that education and employment are very intertwined and can cause either a downward or upward spiral depending on how heavily they are invested in, this interconnection can also cause psychological changes in individuals that affect the community. Poverty Caused by Economic, Political, and Social Distortions or Discrimination Theory also plays a large part in this as this group does not have the same economic, political power due to immigration status and lack of resources and organization to push for policies that actively advocate for this group but instead faces much discrimination (Bradshaw, 2006)
- ❖ 25% of all Hispanics are low-wage fulltime workers (Bateman and Ross, 2019) Hispanic/Latino are more likely to have limited English proficiency (28%) and are more likely to be born out of the U.S at 35%. (Bateman and Ross, 2019) English proficiency is tied to what kind of jobs are available. 39% live below the poverty line and are most likely to include children (Bateman and Ross 2019).
- ❖ U.S. born Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to be more educated than those who are foreign born and more likely to be more proficient in English ((Mora, M. T., & Dávila, A. 2018).

Recommendations

- Improvements in education must be made to lift future generations out of poverty. Education improvements should focus on elementary and High School program that focus on helping student advance to college or vocational school while also improving English literacy
- Local programs that offer direct monetary assistance such as Guaranteed Income should be implemented to allow poor family to have enough income to afford basic needs. .

Selected References

- ❖ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Samples* [SAS Data file]. Retrieved from SocialExplorer.com.
- ❖ Bradshaw, T. K. (2006, February). *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development*. Columbia MO, Corvallis OR; Rural Poverty Research Center.
- ❖ Ludwig-Dehm, S. M., & Iceland, J. (2017). *Hispanic concentrated poverty in traditional and NEW DESTINATIONS, 2010–2014. Population Research and Policy Review, 36*(6), 833-850. doi:10.1007/s11113-017-9446-0
- ❖ Mora, M. T., & Dávila, A. (2018). *The Hispanic–white wage gap has remained wide and relatively steady* [PDF]. Washington, D.C: Economic Policy Institute
- ❖ Ross, M., & Bateman, N. (2019, November). *Brookings-Metro_low-wage-workforce_Ross-Bateman.pdf* [PDF]. 1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20036-2188: Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings