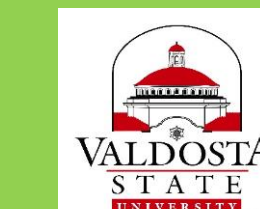


LITERACY: THE DILEMMA IMPOVERISHED AREAS FACE



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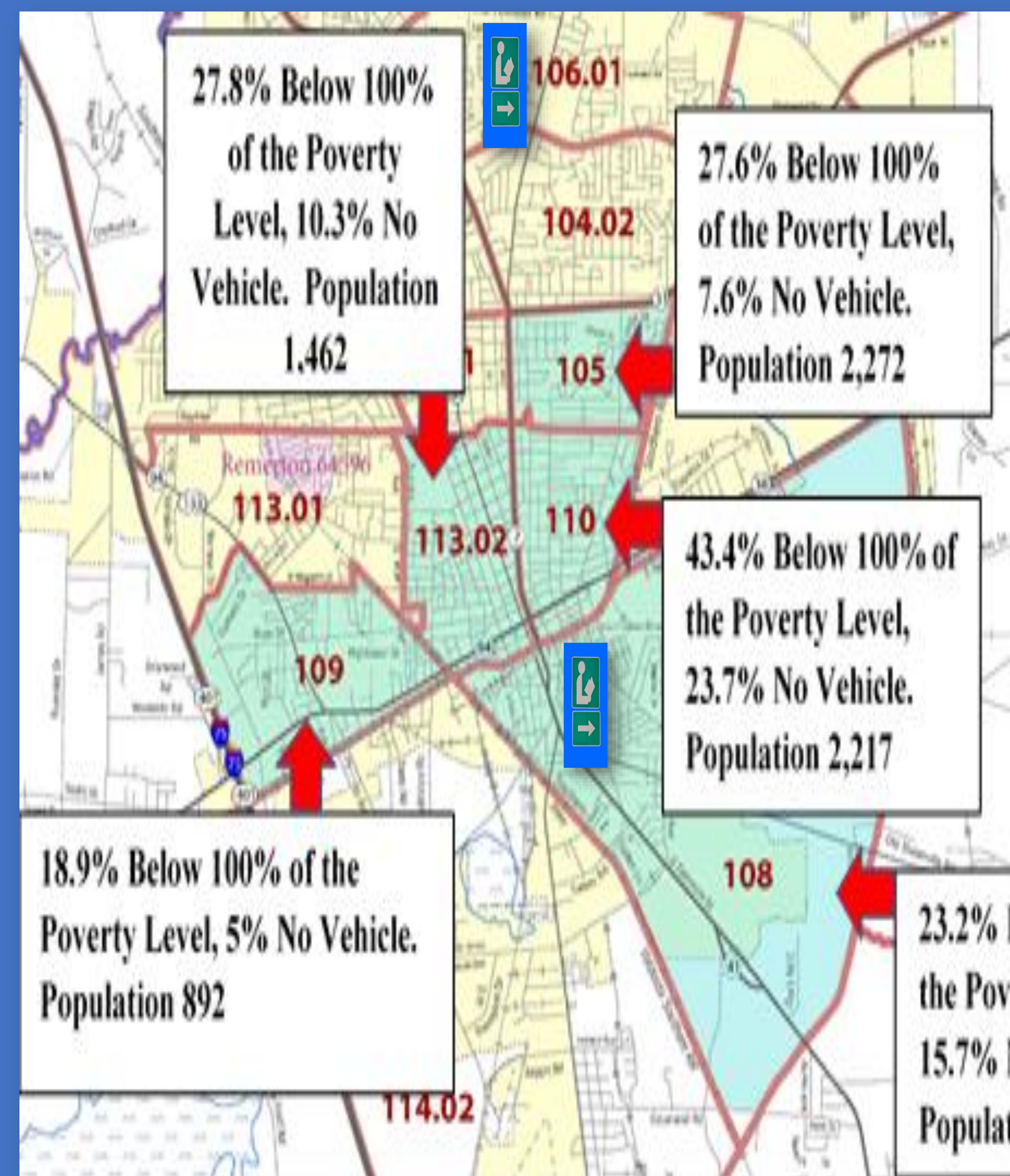
Introduction

Access to literature is instrumental in the enhancement of literacy. Areas suffering from poverty, lack of transportation, and little to no access to public resources such as public libraries are shown to have a lower educational attainment level. These distressed areas are in dire need of resources that offer free literature to aid in the promotion of their literacy rate. Improved literacy aids in economic growth, reduction in poverty, and reduction of crime.

This research will study the poverty levels along with educational attainment levels for all 159 counties located within Georgia but will give additional attention to Lowndes County. First, an examination of all counties in Georgia will be used to demonstrate the correlation between poverty and low educational attainment. Second, census tracts of Lowndes County, Georgia will be used to ascertain the areas highest in poverty and lacking private or public transportation. Third, the study will explore the locations of public libraries in Lowndes County, Georgia to ascertain if the placement of these public resources are accessible to those areas displaying the highest poverty level and with no access to public or private transportation.

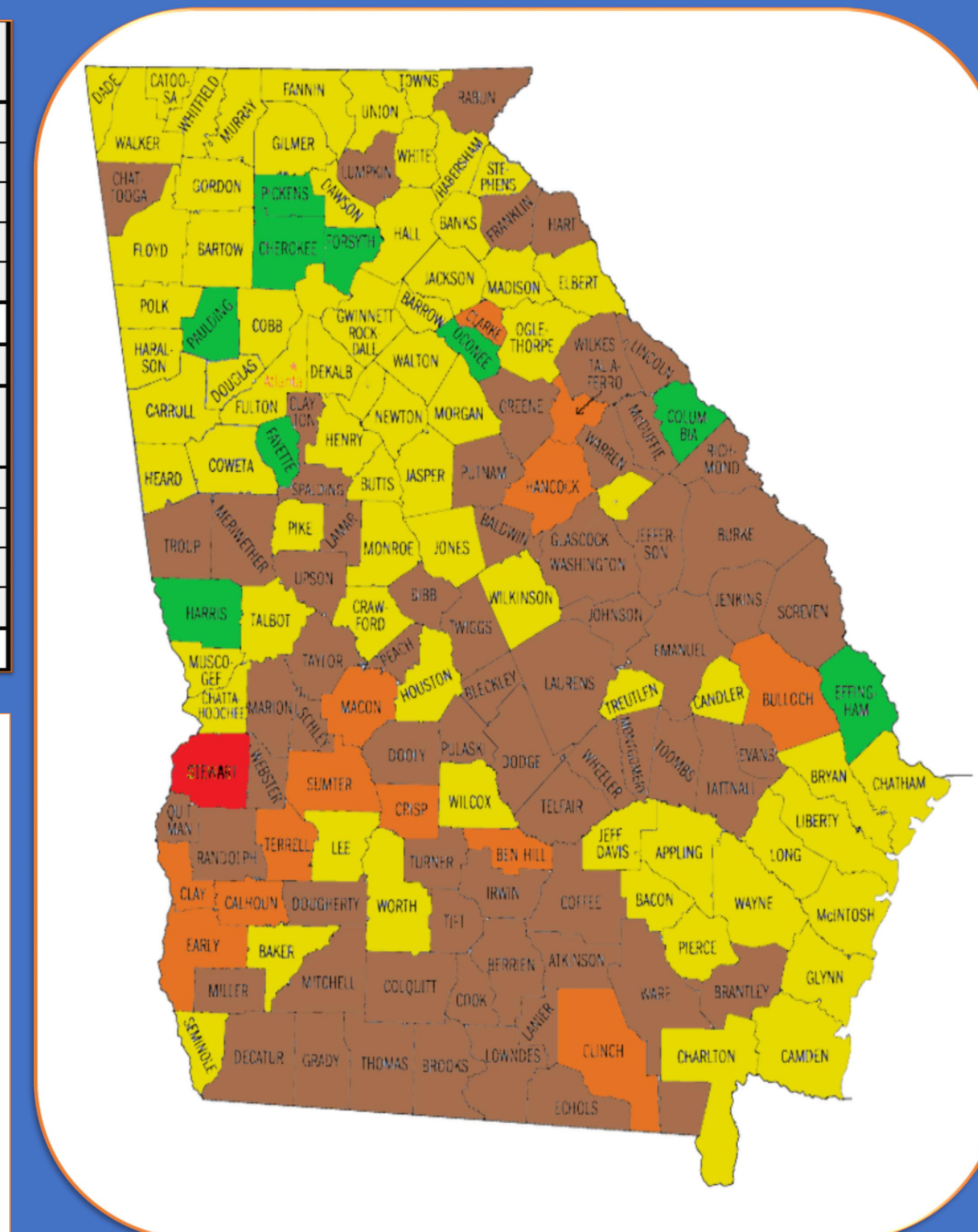
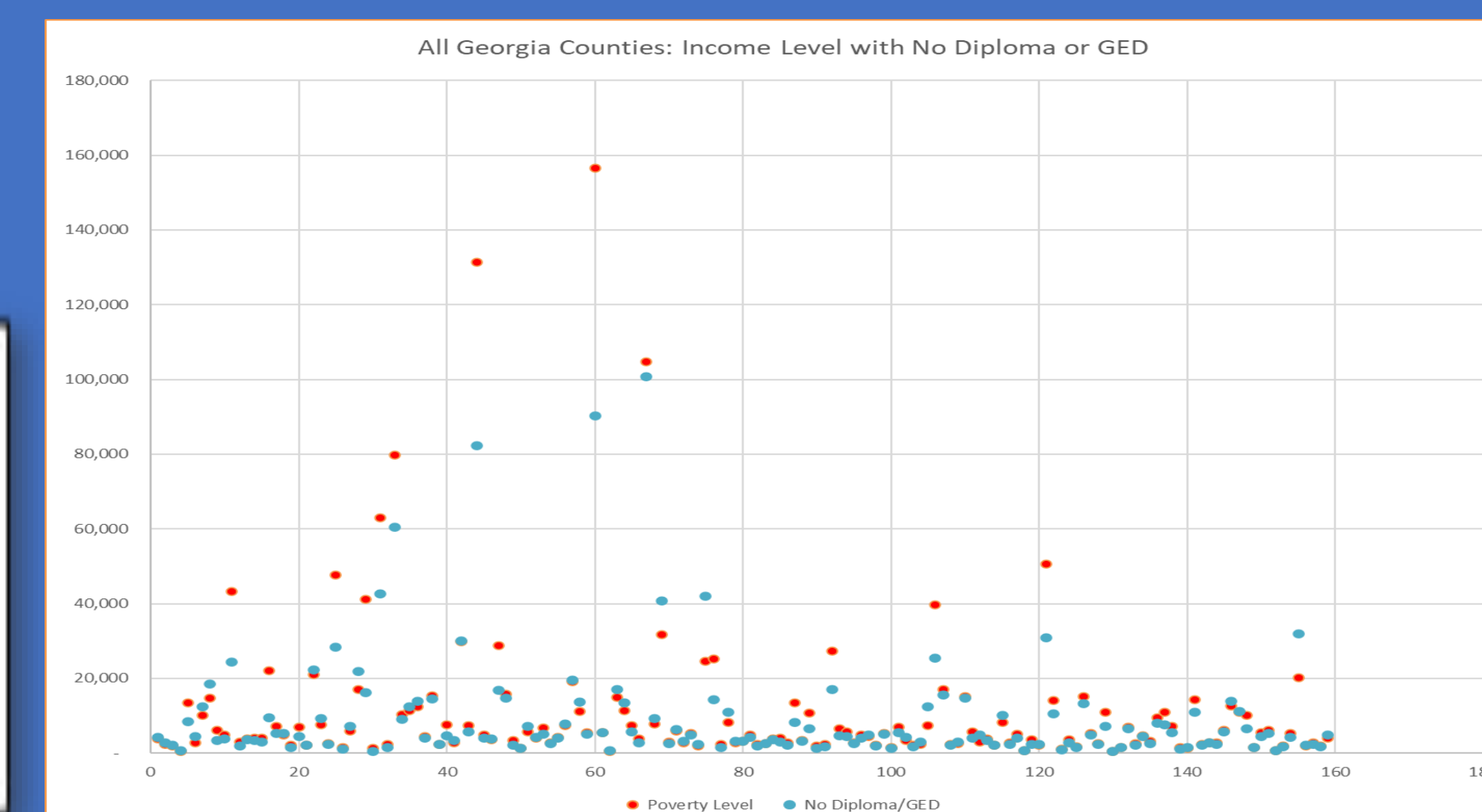
Methods

This research relied on using mixed methods to obtain the data needed to ascertain the impacts lack of resources can have on an already disadvantaged community. Quantitative data was derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey which was used in determining the income and educational attainment level of the 159 counties located within the state of Georgia, it also provided data to ascertain the income level, location, and access to transportation for each of the tracts located in Lowndes County, Georgia. This information was used to pinpoint the areas with the highest probability of need. The qualitative data was derived from observing two public libraries located in Lowndes County, Georgia. These locations consisted of one public library located outside the targeted area (tract 106.01) and the other located within the targeted area (tract 108), this observation was used to analyze their location and accessibility. Google and Google Maps were also employed to determine locations and distance in relation to the tract information obtained.



| Counties % Below Poverty Level | Number of Counties | % | Population Total |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 0-10.9% | 9 | 5.66% | 559,565 |
| 11 - 20.9% | 70 | 44.03% | 4,352,174 |
| 21 - 30.9% | 66 | 41.51% | 4,103,479 |
| 31 - 40.9% | 13 | 8.18% | 808,261 |
| 41 - up % | 1 | 0.63% | 62,174 |
| Totals | 159 | 100.00% | 9,885,653 |

| Counties % With No Diploma or GED | Number of Counties | % | Population Total |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 0-10.9% | 15 | 9.43% | 932,609 |
| 11 - 20.9% | 83 | 52.20% | 5,160,435 |
| 21 - 30.9% | 55 | 34.59% | 3,419,566 |
| 31 - 40.9% | 6 | 3.77% | 373,044 |
| Totals | 159 | 100.00% | 9,885,653 |



Results

The compilation of data showed a direct correlation between poverty and low educational attainment throughout the counties located in Georgia, it also produced five areas that were high in poverty and lacked available transportation in Lowndes County. The tracts pinpointed in Lowndes County was tracts number 105, 108, 109, 110, and 113.02. The tracts selected also showed a lower educational attainment percentage, producing a high probability assumption that poverty and lack of transportation has a profound effect on educational attainment. The research also concluded that these five areas lacked access to public libraries without the use of transportation. The inability to access public resources such as public libraries aids in low educational attainment which stimulates and continues the cycle of poverty. The data collected shows a population of 109,233 in Lowndes County, of this 9,968 reside in the five areas selected. The percentage without any transportation in these areas total 1,383.92 (13.88%).

Conclusion

Research conducted has shown the correlation between poverty and low educational attainment. This is supported through the collection of data provided for all counties located in Georgia as well as the targeted areas depicted in Lowndes County. This study not only brings to light the negative effects poverty and lack of transportation potentially have on one's educational attainment, but also supports the conclusion that inaccessibility to resources is another hindering factor when trying to increase one's literacy and educational attainment. Mapping the locations of public libraries within Lowndes County shows that those without access to transportation in impoverished areas of the county have little to no access to public resources that could increase literacy and educational attainment. These findings have important policy implications, especially in the process of determining the locations best suited for public resources to be placed. Resources are vital in overcoming the restrictions poverty and lack of transportation places on impoverished areas. City and/or county officials should consider the areas most in need when contemplating placement of public facilities such as libraries, as well as considering implementation of a transit system or other viable options to ensure accessibility. Further research will be inclusive of substantiating how placement of public resources are determined as well as researching additional options when a local is financially unable to support a public library.