Lab 5

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Web & Mobile GIS

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**Introduction**

The objective of this WebGIS analysis was to answer the questions of: Do photos on Instagram represent diverse culture and ethnicities in South African urban neighborhoods? The neighborhood of Lansdowne, Cape Town, South Africa was selected because of its diverse racial makeup at the time of the 2011 national census. This was found by exploring the map made by Adrian Frith. It was hypothesized that Instagram would reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the Lansdowne neighborhood of Cape Town.

**Methods**

To create the web map, GitHub was used. A screen shot of the Lansdowne neighborhood from the Racial Dot Map was uploaded to flickr. The latitude and longitude for the center of the map were determined by locating a commercial center in the neighborhood at -33.989360, 18.501971. This location was chosen because it was hypothesized that busier areas would have more Instagram photos. The project file was then created, and named Lab5.html. In this file, the Instagram code was pasted to add photos around the center point to the map layer. A South African flag was chosen as the background for the web page. The map was created as a div object. A second div object was created to hold the text, images, and link to the Racial Dot Map by Adrian Firth. Fonts were imported from Google Fonts. CSS was used to customize the style of the page. A new map layer was chosen for this map, and was retrieved from Thunderforest Maps. The map is called “transportation”. This was embedded on the web page as a tile layer.

Map link: <http://ijsuper.github.io/lab5.html>

**Results**

From examining the Instagram photos that appeared in the location around -33.989360, 18.501971, we can draw the conclusion that the area is somewhat racially and culturally diverse. The photos that appeared at the time of my analysis seemed to reflect people of varying racial backgrounds. One image in particular of three people drinking at a bar appeared to represent three men of different ethnic backgrounds. The images also reflected the varying cultures of South Africa as well. One image even had women wearing head scarves, which could indicate that there is a Muslim population in the neighborhood.

**Conclusions**

Although the Instagram photos did appear to represent cultural and racial diversity in the Lansdowne area of Cape Town, this is not an accurate measure to capture the neighborhoods actual diversity. South Africa is a country with a wide range of incomes, some people in this neighborhood may not be able to afford the technology that would allow them to access Instagram. This could limit the representation of certain ethnic and cultural groups of the neighborhood on Instagram. It is also hard for me as a foreigner, as well as a white person to accurately determine ethnic and cultural diversity in South Africa. A future analysis could map photographs of people in the neighborhood on foot, and then use a local residents to help determine the ethnicities and cultures of the photographs.