The 'Cultural Turn' in Geography and GIS

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Understanding Space and Place

- Critical GIS

- Debates in Human Geography

- The Cultural Turn

- The Sea Scallop Fishery

The Cultural Turn:
A common property example

Agrawal, Arun. 2003. "Sustainable Governance of Common-Pool Resources: Context, Methods, and Politics," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 243-262.

The Cultural Turn:
Lessons from Subaltern studies and Post-structuralism

- understanding internal politics

- understanding difference

- unpacking institutions

The Cultural Turn:
Importance of Subjectivity

"Institutional strategies to govern [common-pool resources] ... do not simply constrain the actions of already existing sovereign subjects. Nor is it the case that people's responses to new forms of regulatory strategies are exhausted by the continuum between resistance and conformity. Instead, it is important to recognize how these strategies and their effects on flows of power shape human subjects, their interests, and their agency" (Agrawal 2003: 258).

Debates in Human Geography

- Are spatial concepts explanatory?

- Spatial contingencies

- The cultural turn in geography

Critical GIS

Objects to: "inadequate representation of space and subjectivity, its positivist epistemology, its instrumental rationality, its technique-driven and data-led methods, and its role as surveillance or military technology deployed by the state"

from Kwan, Mei-Po. 2002. "Feminist Visualization: Re-envisioning GIS as a Method in Feminist Geographic Research," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92(4), p. 645.
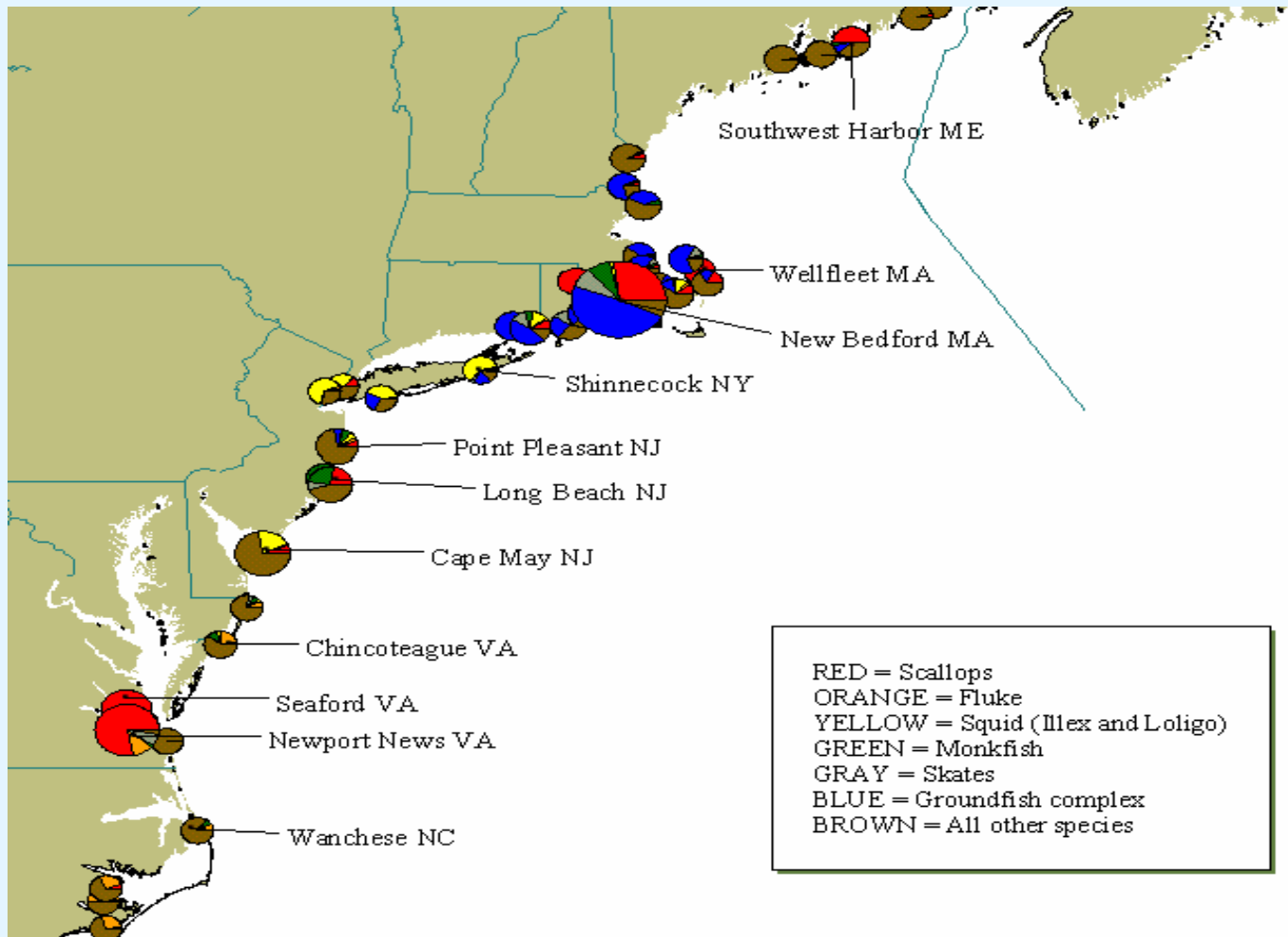
Critical GIS

- "[GIS] cannot demonstrate the process of categorical formation and hegemony, only its product" (Robbins 2003: 249).

- "the normative resource priorities of [different] groups must be placed front and center for debate, along with and the very political conflicts from which they arise (Robbins 2003: 248).

Robbins, Paul. 2003. "Beyond Ground Truth: GIS and the Environmental Knowledge of Herders, Professional Foresters, and Other Traditional Communities," *Human Ecology* 31(2): 233-253.
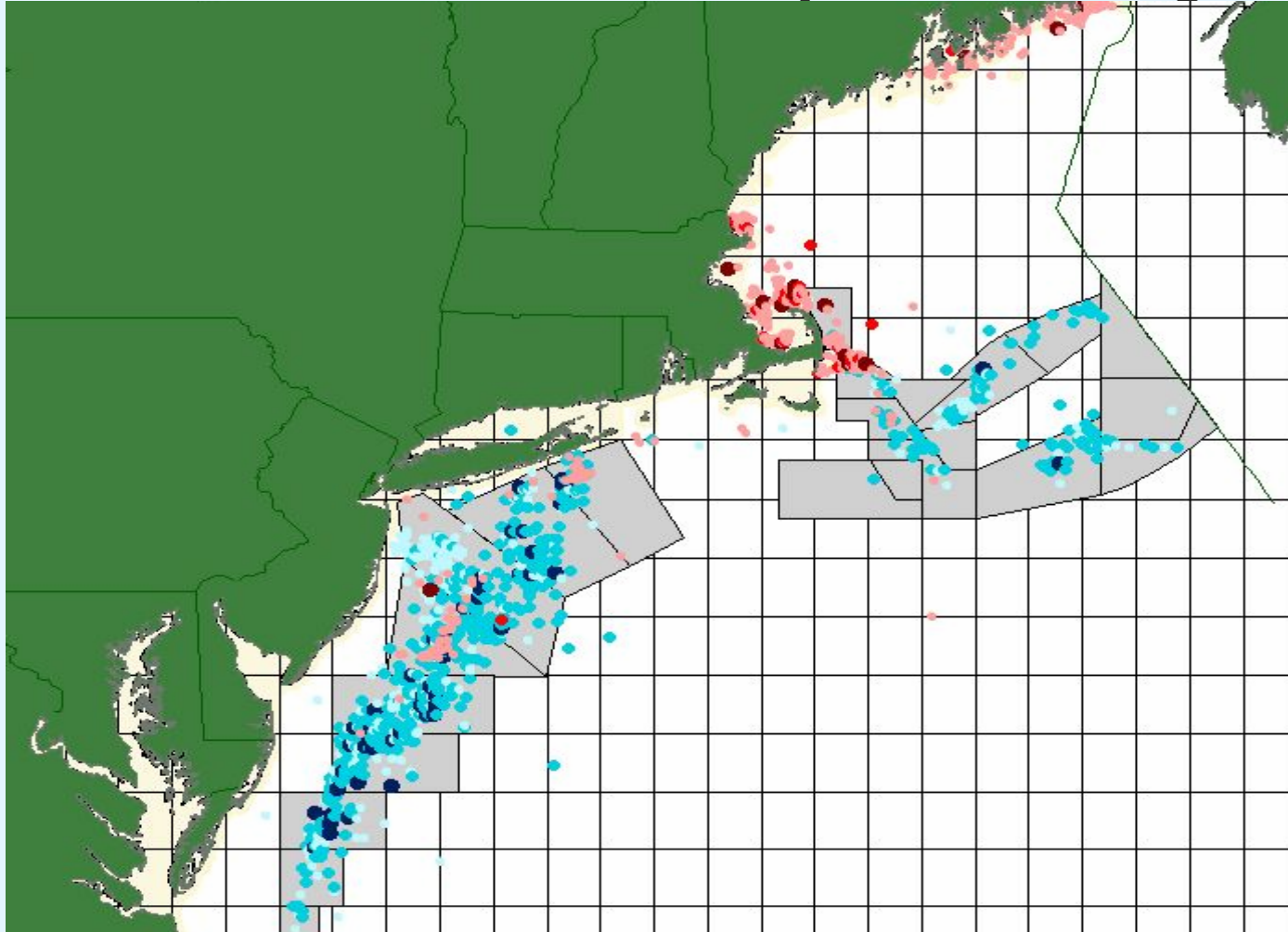
Critical GIS

Critical GIS seeks to understand the "experience of individuals across multiple axes of difference. It aims at illuminating those aspects of everyday life that can be meaningfully depicted using GIS methods" (Kwan 2002: 648).

The Sea Scallop Fishery

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