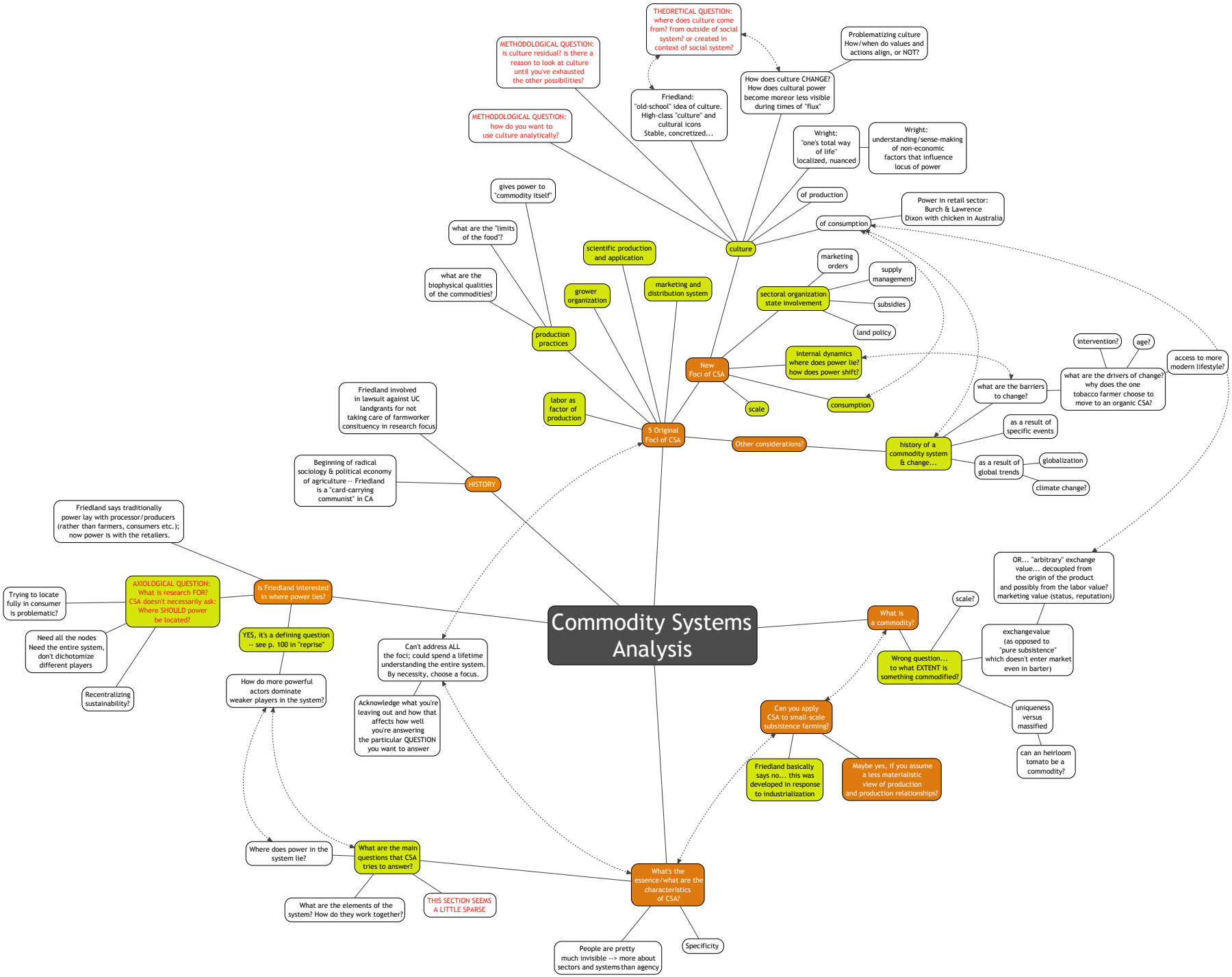
Commodity Systems Analysis
culture
THEORETICAL QUESTION: where does culture come from? from outside of social system? or created in context of social system?
Problematizing culture How/when do values and actions align, or NOT?
How does culture CHANGE? How does cultural power become moreor less visible during times of "flux"
Friedland: "old-school" idea of culture. High-class "culture" and cultural icons Stable, concretized...
METHODOLOGICAL QUESTION: is culture residual? is there a reason to look at culture until you've exhausted the other possibilities?
METHODOLOGICAL QUESTION: how do you want to use culture analytically?
Wright: "one's total way of life" localized, nuanced
Wright: understanding/sense-making of non-economic factors that influence locus of power
of production
of consumption
Power in retail sector: Burch & Lawrence Dixon with chicken in Australia
gives power to "commodity itself"
what are the "limits of the food"?
what are the biophysical qualities of the commodities?
production practices
grower organization
scientific production and application
marketing and distribution system
sectoral organization state involvement
marketing orders
supply management
subsidies
land policy
New Foci of CSA
internal dynamics where does power lie? how does power shift?
consumption
scale
5 Original Foci of CSA
labor as factor of production
Other considerations?
what are the barriers to change?
what are the drivers of change? why does the one tobacco farmer choose to move to an organic CSA?
intervention?
age?
access to more modern lifestyle?
history of a commodity system & change...
as a result of specific events
as a result of global trends
globalization
climate change?
Friedland involved in lawsuit against UC landgrants for not taking care of farmworker consituency in research focus
HISTORY
Beginning of radical sociology & political economy of agriculture -- Friedland is a "card-carrying communist" in CA
Friedland says traditionally power lay with processor/producers (rather than farmers, consumers etc.); now power is with the retailers.
Is Friedland interested in where power lies?
AXIOLOGICAL QUESTION: What is research FOR? CSA doesn't necessarily ask: Where SHOULD power be located?
Trying to locate fully in consumer is problematic?
Need all the nodes Need the entire system, don't dichotomize different players
Recentralizing sustainability?
YES, it's a defining question -- see p. 100 in "reprise"
How do more powerful actors dominate weaker players in the system?
Can't address ALL the foci; could spend a lifetime understanding the entire system. By necessity, choose a focus.
Acknowledge what you're leaving out and how that affects how well you're answering the particular QUESTION you want to answer
What is a commodity?
OR... "arbitrary" exchange value... decoupled from the origin of the product and possibly from the labor value? marketing value (status, reputation)
scale?
Wrong question... to what EXTENT is something commodified?
exchangevalue (as opposed to "pure subsistence" which doesn't enter market even in barter)
uniqueness versus massified
can an heirloom tomato be a commodity?
Can you apply CSA to small-scale subsistence farming?
Friedland basically says no... this was developed in response to industrialization
Maybe yes, if you assume a less materialistic view of production and production relationships?
What's the essence/what are the characteristics of CSA?
Specificity
People are pretty much invisible --> more about sectors and systems than agency
What are the main questions that CSA tries to answer?
Where does power in the system lie?
What are the elements of the system? How do they work together?
THIS SECTION SEEMS A LITTLE SPARSE