

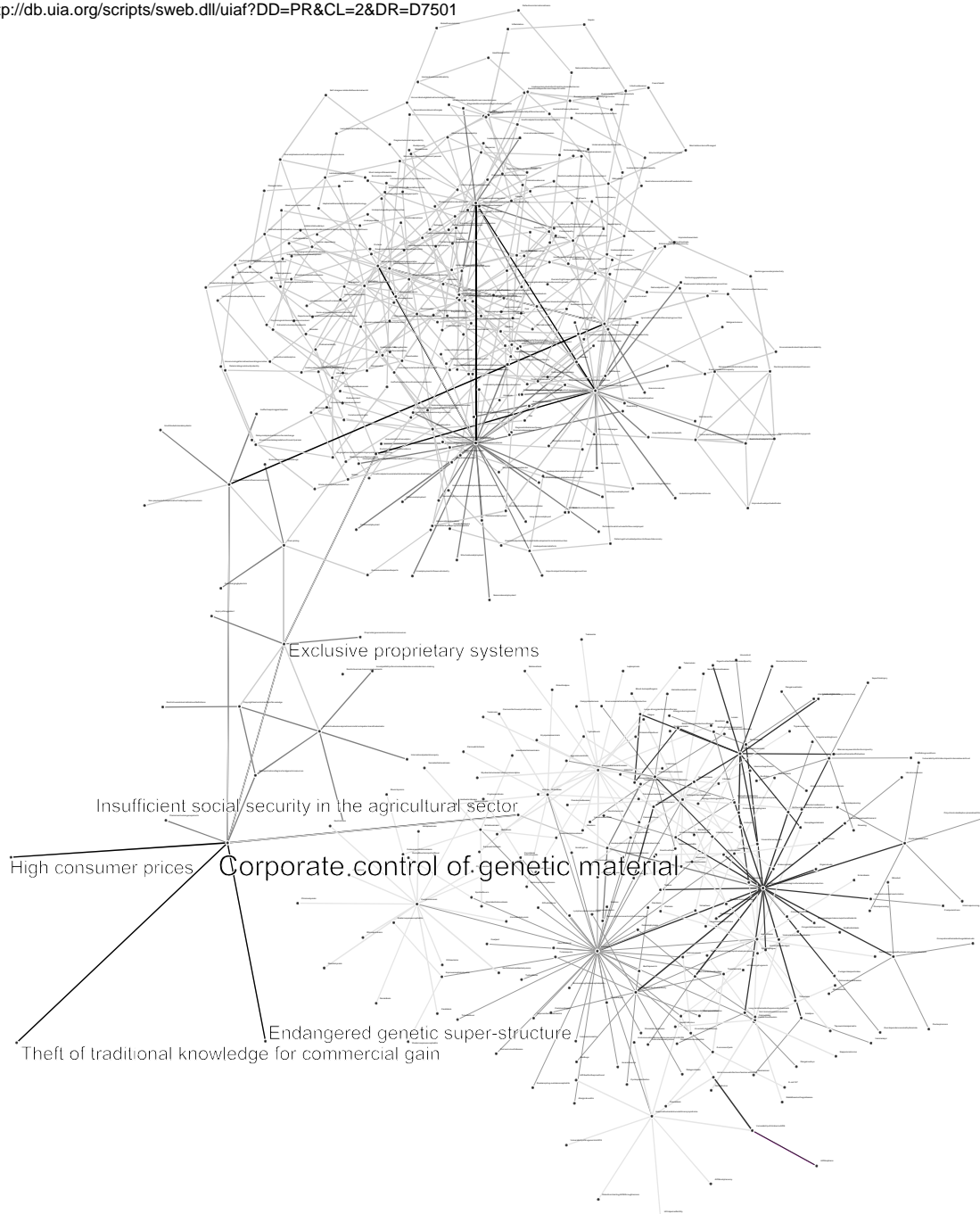
Figure 10.2.26. Corporate control of genetic material

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 538

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=D7501>



In the early 1970s foreign DNA was first successfully implanted into a host microorganism. This achievement was a primary step towards the knowledge that life could be genetically "created" by human beings. In 1988, Victor, a dormouse implanted with a human cancer-producing gene which made him more valuable for medical research, was the subject of a patent granted to European and North American researchers by the USA Supreme Court. Victor was the world's first patented animal. By 1991, a group of US scientists awaited approval of their request for the patenting of the nematode worm, an agriculturally vital species in the elimination of crop parasites. The nematode worm, unlike Victor the dormouse and his offspring, exists in nature without genetic manipulation by man. Those opposed to the pending patent of the nematode worm suggest immorality in human claim to nature. Because biotechnology has become increasingly controlled by large pharmaceutical, chemical and food corporations, whose ability to research and obtain patents dominates the industrialized world, many small organizations and individuals may lose a great amount of money through royalty payments. Patents on genetically manipulated plants and animals first affect farmers, as they may be required to pay royalties to patent holding companies and may be barred from owning offspring of genetically manipulated livestock. Such expense for farmers will undoubtedly be inherited by consumers.