

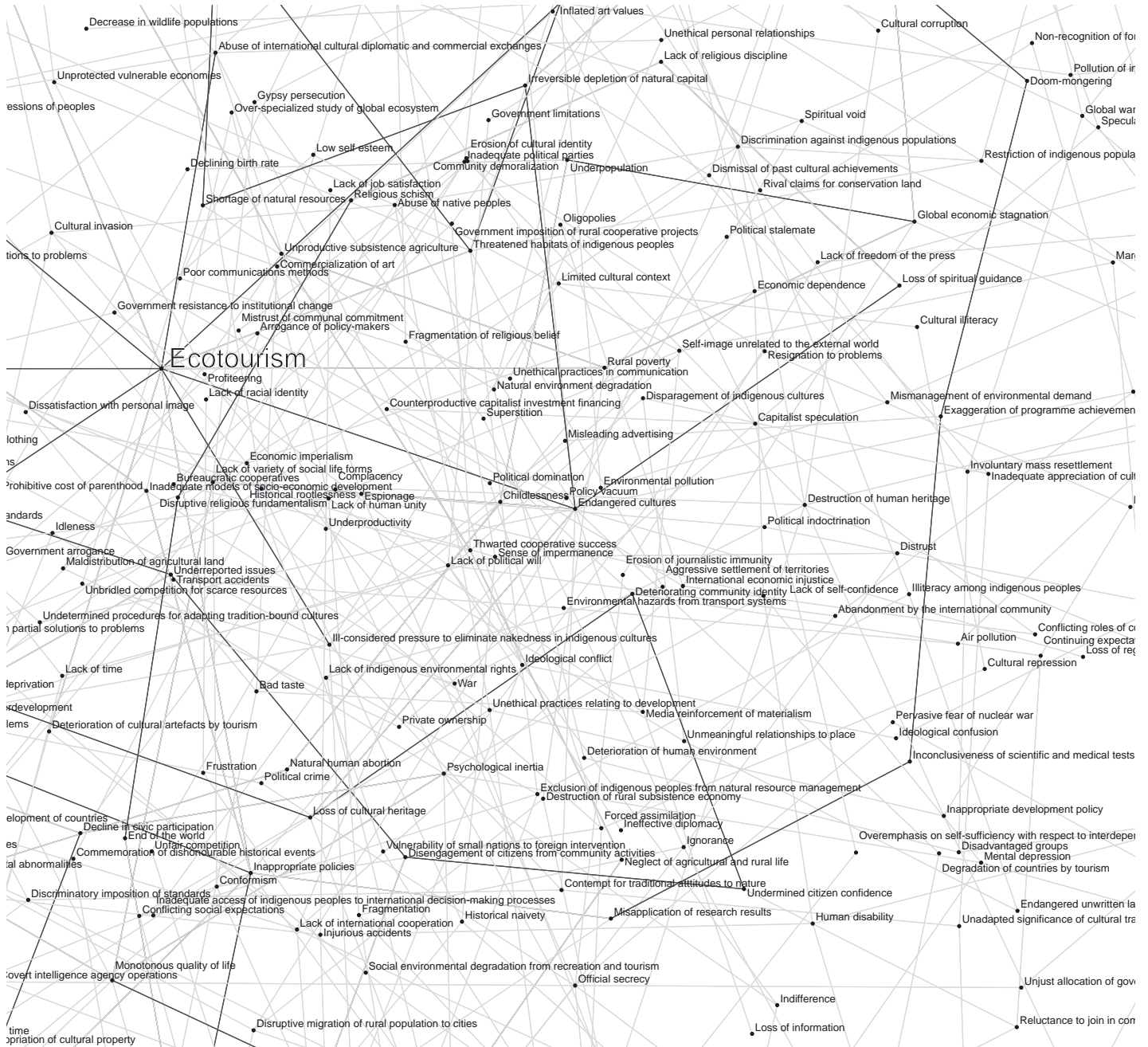
Figure 10.2.16. Ecotourism

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 351

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=J3462>



"Ecotourism" is a fashionable description given to excursions to relatively remote lands, which for the tourist promise the chance to observe unusual wildlife and indigenous inhabitants. The travel industry, in an attempt to market adventure and authenticity to those travellers weary of "civilization", promote travel to environments free of modern technology. Ecotourism's inherent contradiction is the promotion of untouched lands, which immediately become touched by the hands of tourism. Consequent environmental deterioration taints a given land's natural allure. Native cultural practices may also be at stake. To alleviate poverty, native peoples may market cultural practices and products to interested visitors. Eventually native economies shift in response to the demands of tourism, and cultural authenticity threatens disappearance. Wildlife tourism and other types of nature-oriented tourism may have a number of direct impacts on natural resources. The severity of these impacts is variable and has rarely been quantified for any specific cases. Actual or potential impacts include: (i) damage caused by tourism activities and equipment; (ii) increased risk of the spread of pathogens from humans or companion animals to wild species; (iii) increased risk of introduction of alien species; (iv) disturbance of wild species, thereby disrupting normal behaviour and conceivably affecting mortality and reproductive success; (v) alterations in habitats; and (vi) unsustainable consumption of wildlife by tourists.