

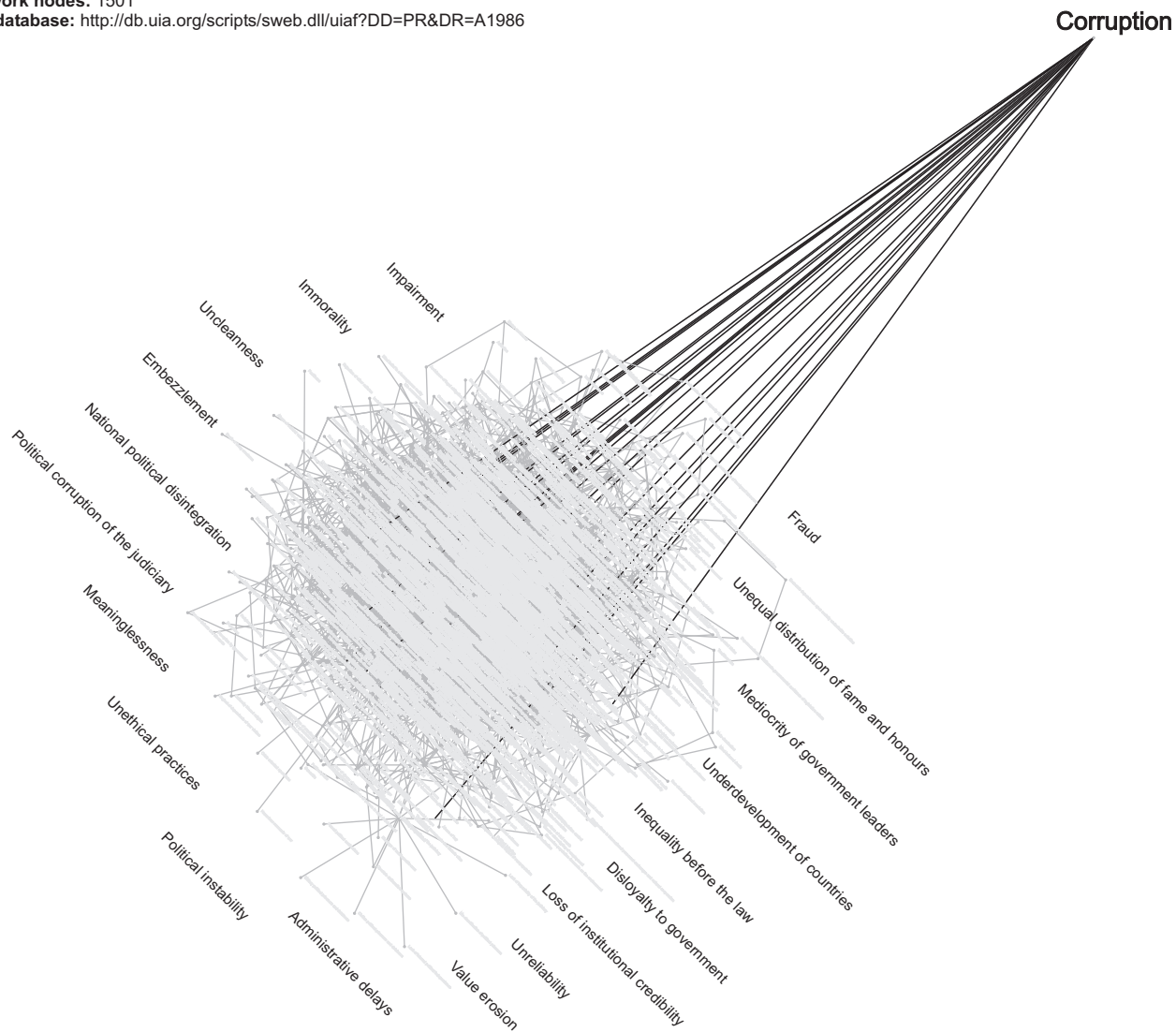
Figure 10.2.9. Corruption

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 1501

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=A1986>



Corruption is a debasement or subversion of integrity or purity and may occur in ideology or personal morality, culture, commerce, civil service (including police) or in politics. It constitutes a barrier to progress, and promotes conflict as a result of frustration and alienation; instability as a result of apathy; violence and crime. It may lead to social, ethnic, political, national and ideological disintegration and possibly revolution. Corruption feeds on itself. People involved in the petty corruption become increasingly involved in more and larger amounts. Corruption has many victims. Public corruption offenses affect all citizens directly and personally, particularly those at the lower end of the income scale. Building inspectors paid small amounts of money to approve shoddy work results in dangerous construction, substandard electrical wiring, and inferior building materials, usually in the poorest areas of town. Judges and lawyers who line their pockets result in criminals set free to victimize citizens. Taxpayers pay for corruption. When officials are bribed to award construction contracts the cost of the bribe goes into the cost of the construction often with interest. In a corrupt system, good people avoid public service. Honest contractors refuse to bid on government contracts; honest lawyers refuse to become prosecutors or judges; honest citizens avoid participating in politics either as voters or candidates. Corruption has been highly detrimental for development. It introduces an element of irrationality in all planning and plan implementation by distorting the actual course of development plans. A common method of exploiting a position of public responsibility for private gain is the threat of obstruction and delay; hence corruption impedes the processes of decision-making and execution at all levels. It increases the need for controls to check the dishonest official. Thus it tends to make administration cumbersome and slow, and prohibits rational delegation of authority. Corruption and the widespread knowledge of corruption counteract the strivings for national consolidation and in particular, decrease respect for and allegiance to the government. In its most evident form, corruption affects dealings of the public with government bureaucracy and political hierarchies whereby money or favour is given in exchange for a benefit from the official. This extends to dealings between business enterprises and the bureaucracy and politicians. But corruption may also affect any transactions, notably with or between businesses, even where no governmental or political body is involved. In its simplest form corruption consists mainly of bribery and tipping. Generally bribes are negotiated payments made before a transaction, whereas tips, reflecting gratitude are paid afterwards based on the evaluation of the donor with regard to short-term and long-term interest in the relationship.