

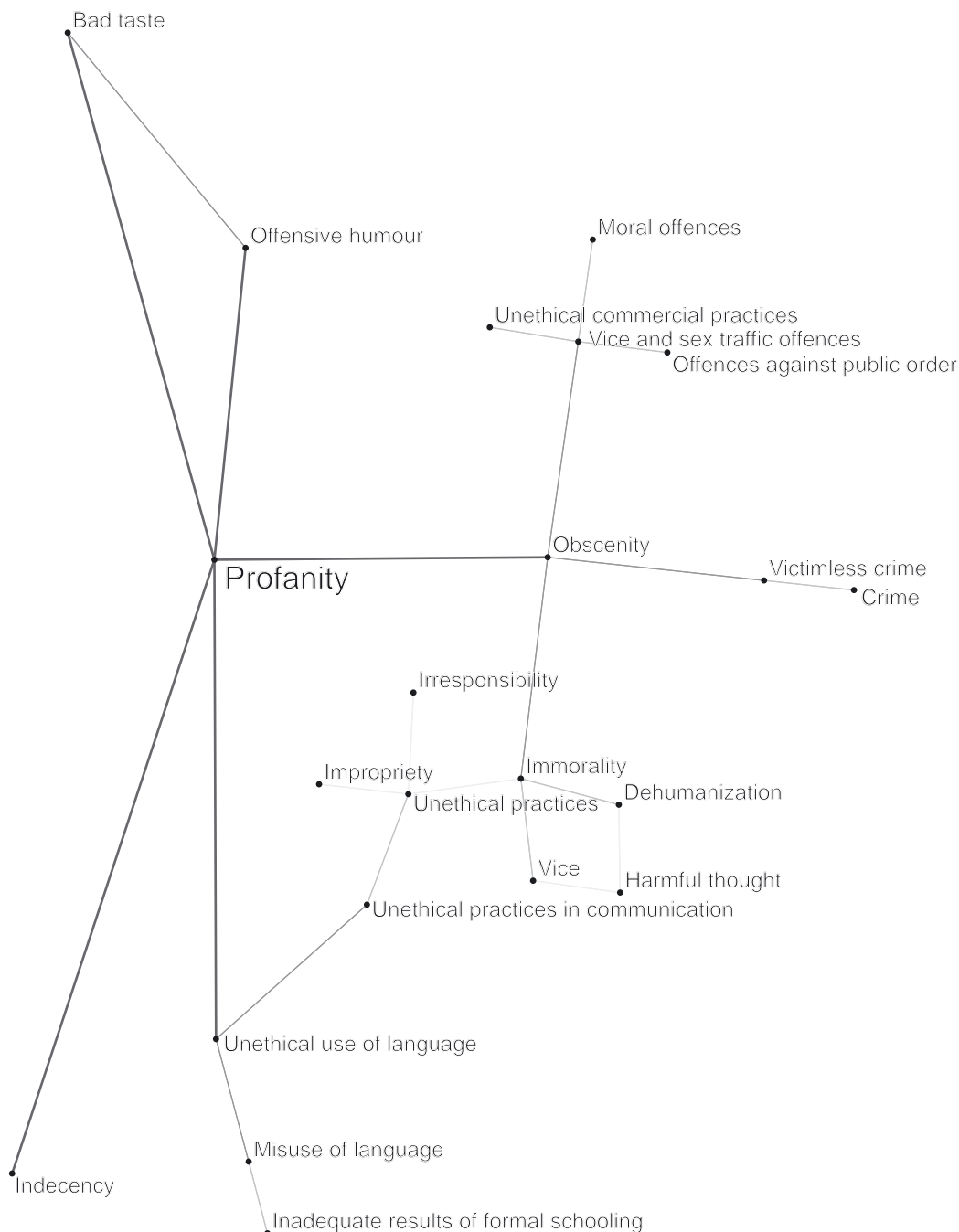
**Figure 10.2.31.**  
**Profanity**

**Database:** World Problems and Issues

**Link type:** broader problems

**Network nodes:** 22

**UIA database:** <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=F7427>



One form of verbal obscenity is the habitual use of language with excretory and genital references, or the frequent utterance of coarse expressions relating to sexual acts. Medically this is termed coprotatia or coprophasia. Its perverted objectives may be to elicit sexual responses, or to attain exhibitionistic auto-erotic excitation. Involuntary coprotatia, as an automatism, may accompany some forms of psychoses in both sexes, but may also be produced under persistent or extreme stress. Traditionally, coprotatia was viewed as a sign of demonic possession. A second group of swear words refer to other parts of the body (not urogenital or anal). A third group are unacceptable because they are considered blasphemous. Many swear words transform over time and enter a more acceptable, even innocuous category: the 1914-18 war destroyed the strength of "bloody" as a swear word. There is also more generosity to users of swear words in moments of anger, passion or frustration, when the word is not intended in its literal meaning. Context appears to be critical in determining borderline cases.