

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. VII. No 2 2022

METAPHORS DESCRIBING AMERICA IN OBAMA'S FIRST PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN – A CASE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MEMOIR *A PROMISED LAND*

Agnieszka Uberman

University of Rzeszów, Institute of Modern Languages, Poland

Received: 14.09.2022 **Reviewed:** 20.09.2022 and 26.09.2022

Similarity Index: 8%

Bibliographic description: Uberman, A. (2022). Metaphors describing America in Obama's first presidential campaign – a case study of the presidential memoir *A promised land*. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2022, VII (2), p. 116-151. ISSN 2453-8035

Abstract: The present research study discusses Barack Obama's metaphorical expressions referring to America, the nation he attempted to change and improve during his presidency. The material for analysis has been extracted from the first two parts of his presidential memoir. The article examines the linguistic metaphorical expressions he uses in his memoir with reference to America, Americans' lives and elections, democracy and values. The expressions will be analysed to identify underlying conceptual metaphors and possible cultural scripts to which they refer.

Keywords: conceptual metaphors, linguistic metaphorical expressions, values, cultural scripts, *A promised land*.

1. Introduction

Presidents of different countries, as well as cultural and political events connected with them, attract the attention of not only fellow citizens or other politicians, but also linguists. For instance, Morozova (2017) in her article addresses conceptual metaphors of Brexit. Panasenکو et al. (2018) discuss how conflict and war are reflected in mass media. The analysed language material refers to the Bush administration and the war

in Iraq. Martynyuk and Meleshchenko (2019) analyse memes that feature the former president, Donald Trump. The conceptual metaphors that are embedded in the memes are studied to show the inferences and emotional attitudes that they evoke. Stashko et al. (2020) consider how the images of Slovak and Ukrainian presidents are created. The interest of the present research lies in the conceptual metaphors that are the basis for metaphorical linguistic expressions used abundantly by Barack Obama in his presidential memoir titled *A promised land*.

"America the greatest; the land of the free; the home of the brave..." – these are but some expressions identifying the United States of America and commonly shared in American national culture, some of which are also reflected in the text of the national anthem. America has for years been dubbed the place of growing rich, considered the place to come to in order to fulfil one's dreams of happiness and wealth, the biblical Promised Land.¹

When Barack Obama as a young politician decided to enter the world of national politics, he first ran for Congress and then took part in presidential elections. The book he wrote titled *A promised land*, his presidential memoir, describes his life preceding these events and also the terms he served in office as the 44th American President, the resident of the White House. The present article is an attempt at identifying the metaphors he employs in his work to discuss the lives of Americans, the social and political system in the USA, as well as the values he believes in and those that are expressed and followed by American citizens. Such values are also reflected in the culture of the nation and certain ways of behaviour accepted by the society. The most recurrent conceptual metaphors that manifest themselves as metaphorical expressions used by the former president will be noted, and will be considered as representative of Obama's perception of America prior to his presidency. The way he views the nation together with its social and political life undoubtedly has a huge impact on American citizens and modernity worldwide, as such a powerful politician has the power if not to shape, then at least to affect reality. The relations between culture, language and the

nature of cultural scripts are briefly sketched in Section 2 titled "Language, culture, and cultural scripts". Language use is a common thread and the means to articulate such values, practices and beliefs. It is not always straightforward as figurative language use is an important feature of discourse, understood generally as "a connected series of utterances by one or more speakers" (Trask 1995: 84). Discourse analysis, as noted by Halliday is the analysis of language in use, "language that is doing some job in some context" (1985: 10). Within the cognitive-discursive paradigm of linguistic analysis, discourse is understood as a speech-and-thinking activity. Dancygier et al. claim that "representation of speech and thought of textually determined participants can take widely varied forms" (2012: 187). They also highlight that cognitive linguists call attention to the fact that "the meaning of an expression owes as much to the specific semantics of the lexical items used as to the meanings prompted through syntactic form and frame evocation" (ibid., 185-186). Metaphorical renderings of meanings embodied in linguistic expressions are the focus of discussion in Section 3 named "Metaphorical language use: Methodology and collecting data", where an outline of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) is presented. The methodology of research and the way material for analysis was gathered are also addressed. The material for analysis has been excerpted from the text of the book *A promised land* (Obama 2020), in which verbal metaphorical expressions are identified. They are analysed and the underlying conceptual metaphors that motivated the expressions are presented and discussed extensively in Section 4 on Barack Obama's metaphorical language. The introductory section addresses the values commonly associated with American culture. The way Obama perceives his country is presented in his own words. The vision of his 'promised land' as well as the nation in its present-day condition, unfolding over the pages of the text of the book (751 pages in total), are studied to identify the metaphors he employs in the expressions used. The book is a presidential memoir and the two parts that are analysed describing the period leading to his first election victory are titled "The bet" and "Yes we can". Conclusions reached on the basis of the analysed data are formulated and presented in the final section of the paper.

2. Language, culture, and cultural scripts

Cultures and languages spoken by particular language and culture communities are interrelated and mutually dependent. Numerous scholars to date (for instance, Bartmiński 2009 analysing cognitive ethnolinguistics; Duranti 2003; 2009 discussing language as culture; Kövecses 2005 discussing metaphors in culture; Kramersch 2015 studying language and culture in language teaching; Mills 2015; Peeters 2016 researching ethnolinguistics and cultural linguistics; Sharifian 2011; 2017 focusing on cultural linguistics and conceptualisations; Underhill 2012 addressing worldviews; Wierzbicka 1992 concentrating on interrelations between semantics, culture and cognition; and many others) have stressed their relationship and interdependence. The linguistic worldview embedded in a given language and expressed through its lexical system is based on the beliefs held by its speakers and the image of reality encoded in its linguistic units. It is not the reflection of reality but its interpretation and, partly creation (when considering fictional phenomena) (*Obyczaje, języki, ...* 2007: 367). Bartmiński defines the concept of worldview in much greater detail stating as follows:

"The linguistic worldview conception is semantic, anthropological and cultural in nature. It is based on the assumption that language codes a certain socially established knowledge of the world and that this knowledge can be reconstructed and verbalised as a set of judgements about people, objects and events. The knowledge results from the subjective perception and conceptualisation of reality by the human mind; it is anthropocentric and relativised to languages and cultures. In contrast to the restrictive structuralist view, the knowledge of the world belongs to the realm of semantics, being entrenched in the very fabric of language, primarily in the meanings of words but also in grammar" (2009: 213).

The "conceptualisations of reality in human mind" referred to by Bartmiński (ibid.) in his definition above, are related to cultural conceptualisations. As discussed by Uberman and Uberman (2021), different aspects of human communication are embedded in cultural conceptualisations which condition language use. "Individual examples of the cultural conceptualisations take the form of cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors" (ibid., 211). Sharifian stresses that:

"Cultural conceptualisations are developed through interactions between the members of a cultural group and enable them to think as if in one mind, somehow more or less in a similar fashion.

These conceptualisations are negotiated and renegotiated through time and across generations. Both inter-generational discourse and intra-generational discourse often reflect such negotiative processes. Discourse may be used as a tool for maintaining cultural conceptualisations through time" (2011: 5).

Sharifian also highlights the fact that:

"as a central aspect of cultural cognition, language serves [...] as a 'collective memory bank' of the cultural cognition of a speech community. Many aspects of a speech community's language are shaped by elements of cultural cognition that have prevailed at different stages in the history of that community and that have left traces in subsequent linguistic practice. In this sense, language can be viewed as a primary mechanism for 'storing' and communicating cultural cognition, acting both as a memory bank and a fluid vehicle for the (re-)transmission of cultural cognition" (2017: 5).

Sharifian (2011: 5) points out that cultural categories and subcategories can be considered "patterns of distributed knowledge across the cultural group", or referred to as "those culturally constructed conceptual categories [...] that are primarily reflected in the lexicon of human languages" (Sharifian 2017: 7). Cultural schemas together with their subschemas mirror beliefs, rules, norms, expectations of behaviour, as well as values concerning different traits and elements of human experience (ibid.).

As noted by Wierzbicka, "cultural scripts are the representation of cultural norms which are widely held in a given society and reflected in language. [...] cultural scripts articulate cultural norms, values and practices" (2015: 339). She stresses that many aspects of human experiences can be explicated by recognising "cultural norms which speakers of different languages share and which are embedded in their vocabulary, grammar and speech routines" (ibid., 340).

These cultural scripts are part and parcel of the given language community's culture; therefore, they are mirrored in the language they speak. Thus, they are present not only in literal but in figurative meanings as well. They will be presented in the discussion that follows.

3. Metaphorical language use: Methodology and collecting data

Figurative language use is commonly considered to add spice to the literal meanings expressed straightforwardly through the lexical language system. Experts in cognitive linguistics (Evans 2007; Kövecses 2002; 2005; 2006; 2010; 2015; 2018; Lakoff & Johnson 1980 and many others) from whose perspective the following analysis will be conducted, unanimously agree that metaphorical language is omnipresent, and it is a significant aspect of a human conceptual system. Metaphors are pervasively present not only in thought but also in human daily communication. Conceptual Metaphor Theory focuses largely on conceptualisation, that is how the human mind creates, processes, and understands messages (Kövecses 2018). A conceptual metaphor in its classical understanding is "a systematic set of correspondences, or mappings, between two domains" (ibid., 125), i.e., elements from the source domain are mapped onto the target domain. Kövecses stresses the fact that

"A major consequence of the idea that metaphors are conceptual in nature, i.e., that we conceive of certain things in metaphorical ways, is that, since our conceptual system governs how we act in the world, we often act metaphorically. When we conceptualize an intangible or less tangible domain metaphorically as, and from the perspective of, a more tangible domain, we create a certain metaphorical reality" (ibid., 127).

Metaphorical linguistic expressions, as further explained by Kövecses, are "words or other linguistic expressions that come from the language or terminology of the more concrete conceptual domain" (2010: 4). As clarified and exemplified further:

"a set of correspondences between a traveler and a person leading a life – the way the traveler is traveling and the manner in which the person lives, the destination the traveler wants to reach and the life goals of the person, and the physical obstacles along the way and the difficulties the person has in life – all comprise a set of mappings that make up the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY" (Kövecses 2015: 2).

In this classical LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, as outlined by Kövecses (2010), the expressions that are used to describe life are comparable to those employed with reference to travel and journeys, e.g., "He's *without direction* in life"; "I'm *at the crossroads* in my life"; "She's *gone through* a lot in life", etc.

Kövecses (2015: 1) states that metaphorical meaning construction is dependent not only on "correlations in experience" and "similarities between experiential domains". Apart from these aspects of experience, however, a central position in metaphorical meaning construction and comprehension is held by context², which the linguist uses in a more general sense considering both linguistic (i.e., "cotext") and nonlinguistic factors. He explains the significance of context for understanding a metaphorical meaning by asserting that "the comprehension of particular metaphorical expressions requires familiarity with the context in which the metaphor is used" (ibid., 6). This notion is illustrated by the exemplification of how differently the expression "My wife is an *anchor*" can be interpreted while providing the context of the utterance, which can be either 'a safe haven' (EMOTIONAL STABILITY/STRENGTH IS PHYSICAL STABILITY/STRENGTH metaphor) or 'a heavy weight making it impossible for one to move and develop' (LACK OF FREEDOM TO ACT IS LACK OF FREEDOM TO MOVE metaphor). Clearly, the context of the conversation affects the interpretation of an embedded meaning.

Moreover, while discussing metaphor analysis, and specifically the identification of metaphors in discourse data, Cameron and Maslen (2010) state that different discourse events produce diverse discourse data. They rightly claim that:

"once we start to work with data and want to identify metaphors in use, we need an operational definition (or operationalization), i.e. a description that can be used in analysing data. An operational definition ideally identifies all metaphors in the data while not identifying as metaphor anything that is not. However, the discourse world is not an ideal world and a watertight definition is not possible, for the simple reason that we are dealing with human language use, with its tendency to push boundaries, extend, and play around with ways of speaking" (ibid., 101-102).

It is explained that "linguistic metaphor can be operationalized [...] through identifying words or phrases that can be justified as somehow anomalous, incongruent or 'alien' in the on-going discourse, but that can be made sense of through a transfer of meaning in the context" (ibid., 102). As noted further, a different manner of addressing the incongruity condition is to identify diverse meanings of given words or phrases in different contexts, i.e., a basic and a contextual meaning. "Metaphorically used words

or phrases must not only be semantically incongruent with the topic of the discourse at that point but must also support a transfer of meaning so that sense can be made of the word or phrase in context" (ibid., 102).

In the discussion to follow, the author will make an attempt at identifying and analysing the conceptual metaphors that are embedded in the metaphorical linguistic expressions employed to sketch American society, its values and the political system, as described by its former President Barack Obama in his book *A promised land*. The material, as briefly mentioned earlier, has been extracted from the first two parts of the presidential memoir (203 pages). Those two extensive sections of the volume describe the life and political campaigns prior to Obama's becoming the 44th President of the United States. The cognitive linguistic paradigm will be implemented in this analysis in line with the theory of conceptual metaphor. The metaphorical linguistic expressions employed in the text of his memoir will be listed and the possible conceptual metaphors contained in them will be identified. Moreover, as they are likely to reflect the cultural scripts characteristic of American society, an attempt will be made to bring them to the fore.

4. Barack Obama's metaphorical language: Discussion

It has been brought to attention that cultural norms and values are mirrored in the language use. Some of the most frequently proclaimed American values seem to be freedom, truth, good, God, but also the rule of law, democracy, equal rights (regardless of gender, religion, race, or beliefs), or equality of opportunity for all (as discussed by among others Best 2018 with reference to social issues; Blanke 2000 analysing consumer culture; Borstelmann 2020; Caldwell 2007; Gooding 2018; Rohe & Watson 2007, all addressing the American dream with all its values and hopes; Samuel 2017 addressing the American way of life; Winograd & Hais 2011 focusing on remaking America).

Obama states as follows: "Perhaps most troubling of all, our democracy seems to be teetering on the brink of crisis – a crisis rooted in a fundamental contest between two

opposing visions of what America is and what it should be" (2020: xv). Unfortunately, some more bitter words follow.

"This contest is not new, of course. In many ways, it has defined the American experience. It's embedded in founding documents that could simultaneously proclaim all men equal and yet count a slave as three-fifths of a man. It finds expression in our earliest court opinions, as when the chief justice of the Supreme Court bluntly explains to Native Americans that their tribe's rights to convey property aren't enforceable since the court of the conqueror has no capacity to recognize the just claims of the conquered. It's a contest that's been fought on the fields of Gettysburg and Appomattox but also in the halls of Congress, on a bridge in Selma, across the vineyards of California, and down the streets of New York – a contest fought by soldiers but more often by union organizers, suffragists, Pullman porters, student leaders, waves of immigrants, and LGBTQ activists, armed with nothing more than picket signs, pamphlets, or a pair of marching shoes. At the heart of this long-running battle is a simple question: Do we care to match the reality of America to its ideals? If so, do we really believe that our notions of self-government and individual freedom, equality of opportunity and equality before the law, apply to everybody? Or are we instead committed, in practice if not in statute, to reserving those things for a privileged few?" (ibid.).

Despite these doubts and reservations, Obama also clearly states his ideals:

"But the idea of America, the promise of America: this I clung to with stubbornness that surprised even me. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" - that was my America. The America Tocqueville wrote about, the countryside of Whitman and Thoreau, with no person my inferior or my better, the America of pioneers heading west in search of a better life or immigrants landing on Ellis Island, propelled by a yearning for freedom. [...] It was the Constitution and The Bill of Rights, crafted by flawed but brilliant thinkers who reasoned their way to a system at once sturdy and capable of change. An America that could explain me" (ibid., 14).

He further notes, "the very same values – honesty, and hard work, and empathy – that had been drilled into me by my mother and grandparents" (ibid., 15) have been instilled in him since childhood. Other values to which Obama refers are also "faith and work, family and community, education and upward mobility" (ibid., 142).

It is the aim of the present discussion to identify the metaphorical expressions used by Obama and attempt to identify the image of the American society that is portrayed by the use of such turns of phrase, also in relation to values expressed and/or addressed by the former president of the USA.

A promised land was published in 2020 after the end of Obama's two terms in office as the president of the USA and describes his path to presidency and the periods in office.

The analysis of Obama's text will consider the period of the first presidential campaign prior to the announcement of election victory. The metaphorical language used in the available material covering this period that provides the description of values sought for by Obama and the hopes for the changes to be applied to the system as described with reference to his first attempt at winning presidential elections, is representative of the then United States. For this reason, the discussion and analysis of language used by the American president in the book will be limited to the timeframe preceding his first term in office and as the White House resident.

A total of 367 verbal metaphors have been identified in the analysed text. Surprisingly, only a single one refers to the title '**promised land**'. The most numerous group of 71 metaphorical expressions refers to **the process of campaigning and elections** (including losing and winning), while **political life, democracy, patriotism, government, rules, equality, and presidency** are mirrored by 56 phrases and expressions. Quite a substantial group of 61 metaphorical expressions designate **human life, nature, and emotions** in general. **Changes, expectations, decisions ideas, and opinions** are present in 35 metaphorical linguistic expressions, whereas the **mind, learning, and experiences** as well as **work and success** are featured by 32 instances of metaphorical language use. **Economic status and financial situation** are significant elements of the life of any society, and they are reflected in 29 instances of language use. **Media attention and media coverage** are exemplified by 24 metaphorical linguistic expressions. References to **health** are noted in 10 exemplars, the remaining cases are of miscellaneous character.

It is evident from the text that, once the decision was made to run in election, he was determined to win and introduce changes to the system so that it reflected the America he was brought up to believe in, the title 'promised land'.

"America we have been promised" (p. xvi) is a metaphorical linguistic expression for the metaphor THE COUNTRY IS A PROMISED LAND (A LAND OF BETTER

LIFE / FUTURE). The statement "America that aligns with all that is best in us" (p. xvi) is the lexical exponent of the metaphor COUNTRY AND PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS THAT CAN BE SET.

The expression "a cross section of America" (p. 31-32) is the illustration of a metaphor A STATE / NATION IS A LIVING ORGANISM, and "a chorus of Americans from every corner of the state" (p. 48) designates the association A STATE IS AN ENCLOSED CONTAINER OR FIGURE while its citizens A GROUP WITH SIMILAR OPINIONS IS A GROUP OF SINGERS.

Obama's hope "to remake the world" (p. xvi) is the embodiment of the conceptual metaphor THE WORLD IS A STRUCTURE THAT CAN BE REBUILT / RECREATED. While stating "the relentless march toward an interconnected world in which people and cultures can't help but collide" (p. xvi) a few metaphors can be identified, i.e., THE WORLD IS A PLACE OF CULTURES AND PEOPLE CONNECTING; NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE OPPOSING FORCES THAT CLASH as well as NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE OPPOSING FORCES THAT COME TOGETHER WITH SOLID IMPACT.

In the preface, a reference to Americans' visions of their country is made. A statement "a fundamental contest between opposing visions of what America is and what it should be" (p. xv) represents the metaphor DIFFERENT VISIONS OF AMERICA ARE STRUGGLING FORCES / OPPONENTS IN A COMPETITION. Obama's title idea of America as a biblical 'promised land' is his driving force for both talking up the challenge to first run for Congress and then for presidency.

It has to be noted that one of the most productive values and notions in terms of producing metaphorical linguistic expressions in the analysed section of Obama's book is 'democracy' and the 'rule of law'. Considering the fact that much of the writing is devoted to the congressional and presidential campaign, this is not a surprising fact.

By stating "democracy seems to be teetering on the brink of crisis" (p. xv) two metaphors can be identified, namely: CRISIS IS AN ENTITY BEYOND LIMITS / THRESHOLD OF A PLACE as well as DEMOCRACY IS (A TIGHTROPE WALKER) / AN INDIVIDUAL TAKING UNSTEADY STEPS. In the following statement concerning democracy, i.e., "Democracy is not a gift from on high or a division of spoils between interest groups" (p. 11), it is viewed as two things based on metaphors DEMOCRACY IS A PRESENT OR DEMOCRACY IS A TROPHY OBTAINED AFTER A CONFLICT. Obama declares that democracy is "an ideal worth pursuing" (p. 11); such conceptualisation is based on VALUES ARE GOALS TO BE REACHED / AHEAD ALONG A LINE TO FOLLOW. The merits of democracy are also highlighted in the metaphorical expression "a democracy proved to be a chorus" (p. 98), which embodies the metaphor A POLITICAL / SOCIAL SYSTEM IS A GROUP OF MUSICIANS / SINGERS / PERFORMERS.

Patriotism is one of the values that Americans are proud of and show in various ways, one of which is during parades: "waving small flags [...] pleasant rituals, not sacred duties" (p. 13) is an exemplification of the metaphor SHOWING PATRIOTISM IS A RITUAL. Similarly, members of the military are highly respected and their services widely appreciated. This can be illustrated by the expression "the glory of marching in Patton's army" (p. 13) standing for the projection SERVING THE COUNTRY IN THE MILITARY FORCES IS A GLORIOUS ACT.

A numerous group of expressions are related to the government and politicians. As noted above, the metaphorical linguistic expressions referring to **the process of campaigning** and **elections** comprise over 70 instances, while **political life**, **democracy**, **patriotism**, **government**, **rules**, **equality**, and **presidency** are represented by 56 exemplars (a few of which, referring to **patriotism** and **democracy**, have already been illustrated in the preceding paragraph). It is interesting to note that more negative aspects of public service are outlined rather than civil servants' merits. Let us consider the available instances.

Saying "to hold public office" (p. 7) is a way of conveying the metaphor PRESIDENCY/ GOVERNMENT POSITION IS AN OBJECT HELD IN A HAND. When referring to "the sins of government corruption" (p. 6), metaphors GOVERNMENT IS EVIL DOER as well as EVIL BEHAVIOUR IS HARMFUL AND UNCHASTE can be identified. By evoking "breach of institutional norms" (p. xv), VIOLATING RULES IS BREAKING THE STANDARD / APPROVED FORMS OF BEHAVIOUR is the underlying metaphor for the expression.

Referring to politicians Obama notes that "they were actors in a rigged game" (p. 11), which is a figurative expression formed on the basis of the metaphors POLITICS IS A FAKE THEATRE and POLITICIANS ARE ACTORS IN A FAKE THEATRE. In the fitting way to carry out public office duties politicians should "build power by lifting others up not putting them down" (p. 11). Those linguistic expressions are rooted in the metaphorical mappings UP IS GOOD; DOWN IS BAD as well as POWER IS A STRUCTURE (YOU CAN BUILD) or POWER IS A BUILDING. A metaphor AN INDIVIDUAL/A POLITICIAN IS AN OBJECT IN A CONTAINER is exemplified by an expression "election [...] held to replace him" (p. 24). On a lighter note, "he travelled across the state [...] emanating folksy charm" (p. 125) an image of A POLITICIAN IS AN INDIVIDUAL EMITTING MAGIC POWER can be identified.

Young politicians, who are inexperienced and not yet very influential, are not highly appreciated or given much attention. This is evidenced by the statement "Republicans in Congress would have me for lunch" (p. 125) in which the metaphorical reading is clearly AN INEXPERIENCED POLITICIAN IS A FOOD ITEM. The same lack of appreciation is also expressed in words "a special designation for junior members in the minority like me – 'mushrooms' " (p. 33) which is founded on the metaphor A YOUNG POLITICIAN IS A PLANT / MUSHROOM GROWING IN THE DARK. In contrast, experienced ones are compared to strong animals: "the old bulls of the Senate" (p. 57), i.e., POLITICIANS/SENATORS ARE STRONG / POWERFUL ANIMALS.

Politics, as exemplified by the following instances, is straightforwardly considered as a sport / game, a mechanism of some sort, or a building structure:

"bare-knuckle politics" (p. 26) – POLITICS IS A BOXING GAME;

"went after each other like gladiators in the ring" (p. 125) – POLITICAL OPPONENTS ARE BOXERS / FIGHTERS / GLADIATORS;

"You need to go back on the horse" (p. 37) – ENGAGING IN POLITICS IS RIDING HORSES;

"Family got dragged along for the ride, put in the line of fire" (p. 71) – POLITICAL ACTIVITY/INVOLVEMENT IS A RIDE;

"hardball politics" (p. 30) – POLITICS IS A SPORT / A GAME;

Referring to Obama's success with part of the campaign: "You're gonna need a bigger boat" (p. 52) – ENGAGING IN POLITICS IS USING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT;

"I navigated local politics" (p. 93) – DOING POLITICS IS SAILING / FLYING A PLANE;

"the nuts and bolts of politics", "campaign mechanics" (p. 30) – POLITICS IS A PIECE OF MACHINERY;

"a politics that bridged America's [...] divides" (p. 41); "bridge-building politics" (p. 41) – POLITICS IS A BUILDING / STRUCTURE.

An unfavourable opinion about politics is expressed by means of the phrase "the politics were muddy" (p. 46), which is based on the notion POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS MUDDY WATERS. Politics is also equated to a BUSINESS DEAL, i.e., "that was politics [...] a series of transactions mostly hidden from view" (p. 33). The metaphor motivating such a metaphorical linguistic expression is POLITICS IS A BUSINESS DEAL or POLITICS IS A FINANCIAL OPERATION. A monetary aspect is also evident in the expressions "his newly minted populism" (p. 87) representing the conceptual metaphor POLITICAL ATTITUDES / BELIEFS / MOTTOS ARE COINS. Political opinions are essential in the lives of citizens and are likened to rulers, as in the metaphorical expression "challenge America's reigning political assumptions" (p. 41) reflecting the metaphor POLITICAL OPINIONS ARE MONARCHS / RULERS.

Politicians need to have their own opinions; Obama refers to the process "my political awakening" (p. 11) – CLARIFYING / IDENTIFYING POLITICAL OPINIONS IS WAKING UP FROM SLEEP.

When Obama says he wants to "end my political career on a higher note" (p. 40) and "the idea of playing second fiddle" (p. 164), the underlying metaphors of his statements are BEING INVOLVED IN POLITICS IS PLAYING MUSIC and A POLITICIAN IS A MEMBER OF THE ORCHESTRA.

Making new laws is associated with trading. While expressing a statement "legislators weighing the competing pressures of various interests with the dispassion of bazaar merchants" (p. 33), the metaphors INFLUENCE / STANDPOINT IS A PIECE OF MERCHANDISE ON SCALES and LEGISLATORS ARE MERCHANTS are the grounds for the above quoted lexical exponents. Writing legislature is also compared to sculpting, as in "able to shape significant legislation" (p. 33) based on the metaphor A LEGAL ACT IS A PLASTIC OBJECT; or to creating music, as in "fine-tuning a brief" (p. 36) based on EDITING A POLITICAL DOCUMENT IS ADJUSTING A PIECE OF MUSIC.

The process of preparing, drafting, discussing, and voting laws is complex and far from straightforward. Many heated discussions take place before lawmakers agree on a piece of legislation and introduce it into the legal system. This can be evidenced by the following examples of expressions "it became a brawl", "one debate that week turned into an absolute slugfest" (p. 125) with the underlying metaphor POLITICAL DEBATING IS QUARELLING. A legal act is considered flammable, e.g., in the creation of the expression "a bill I'd introduced went down in flames" (p. 34) the following metaphors have been adopted LOSING A VOTE IS BURNING DOWN and A PIECE OF LEGISLATION IS A FLAMMABLE OBJECT. Another power-charged association is made in the phrase "ideological hot buttons [...] that might generate heat

from their base" (p. 33) with the underlying metaphor IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES ARE FRICTION POINTS / HEAT GENERATORS.

While debating various issues, political opponents' opinions clash and they try to convince one another of their own point of view. When this is not successful, the decisions have to be taken 'the hard way'. The example below illustrates the expression based on the metaphors POLITICS IS A BATTLEFIELD and MAKING DECISIONS IS MOVING ACROSS A BATTLEFIELD, namely "I didn't share these conversations beyond my senior staff [...] feeling as if I had stepped into a minefield and shouldn't make any sudden moves" (p. 68).

A tremendous effort of a substantial number of staff members and volunteers was devoted over the years to running both congressional and presidential campaigns. This has resulted in Obama's victories and proved to produce the most numerous group of metaphorical linguistic expressions formulated on the basis of the underlying conceptual metaphors.

SPORTS and RACES are source domains in a number of metaphorical linguistic expressions. Voicing his intention "to someday run for public office" (p. 17), Obama employed the metaphor A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A SPORTS RACE. The same underlying metaphor appears in the phrases "mayoral races [...] congressional races" (p. 92) – POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS ARE (HORSE)RACES / SPORTS – as well as "run for president" (p. 55) or "the idea of me running for president" (p. 65) – PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IS A RACE. Referring to his decision to enter a campaign as "maiden political campaign [...] a bare-bones operation" (p. 26) is representative of the metaphor A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A BOXING GAME. Similarly, a sporting spirit is embodied by the expressions "both parties dashing around the state [...] trying to win over [...] voter" (p. 105) standing for the POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A SPORT / A GAME metaphor.

"I grew accustomed to the drill" (p. 90) can be considered at the crossroads of sports language and military language, i.e., POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING IS MILITARY TACTICS / PRACTICE / SPORT. Military-related metaphors are also evidenced in the analysed material. The statement "the principles of organizing could be marshalled not just to run a campaign but to govern" (p. 18) is built on the conceptualisation ORGANISING SKILLS ARE ARMY DRILLING TECHNIQUES, while the phrases "voters loved a happy warrior" (p. 86), "a man [...] who didn't carry the same battle scars" (p. 104), "Hillary embarked on a blitzkrieg tour" (p. 105), or "we know the battle ahead will be long" (p. 111) are representative of the metaphors PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IS A BATTLE; POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING IS A WAR / A BATTLE; CAMPAIGNING IS WARFARE / COMBAT OR RUNNING FOR ELECTION IS WARFARE / COMBAT.

Many metaphors that describe the process of political campaigns are related to various means of transport and travelling. Let us consider the following examples: A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IS A MISSILE / A SPACE SHUTTLE is a conceptual metaphor projected by the expression "launching a national campaign" (p. 66).

The difficulty of the process is stressed by the expression "To aspire beyond that seemed foolish, a flight too close to the sun." (p. 116) representative of the metaphor RUNNING IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (FOR A BLACK CITIZEN) IS A SPACE MISSION. Similarly, "I tried to lead voters and my own campaign through this uncharted territory" (p. 119) exemplifies the metaphor RUNNING A CAMPAIGN IS TRAVELLING THROUGH WILDERNESS, which undoubtedly accentuates the hardships of the undertaking.

CAMPAIGNING IS ACCELERATING WHILE DRIVING is a conceptual metaphor underlying the following expression: "I needed to step on the gas" (p. 36) while "we were kick-starting a magical ride" (p. 82) represents the conceptualisation POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A MOTORCYCLE RIDE. A campaign is also referred to as "some

form of spontaneous combustion" (p. 16), which rests on the premise that A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A MOTOR ENGINE; "as if our campaign would go entirely off the rails" (p. 82) CAMPAIGN IS A TRAIN TRACK; "a third element kept [...] the campaign [...] afloat" (p. 92) POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A FLOATING VESSEL. The expression "on the campaign trail" (p. 51) relies on the metaphorical projection A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A ROUTE TO FOLLOW.

A number of other conceptual metaphors can also be noted, with individual expressions to exemplify them, such as: "the [...] campaign felt the shifting tide" (p. 102) POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ARE TIDE WATERS; "selling them a candidate like a box of laundry detergent" (p. 94) or "Campaigning on this more retail [...] scale" (p. 96) POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING IS TRADING / SELLING GOODS; "encounters that made the campaign come alive" (p. 96) A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IS A LIVING ORGANISM.

Some external forces are evoked in the statements "the notion of God calling me to run for president. [...] some invisible pull of the universe", "circumstances may have opened the door to a presidential race" (p.71) or " 'Lord, [...] make me an instrument of your will' " (p. 160). The metaphors that are the basis for generating such expressions is INVOLVEMENT IN A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IS A SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENON and A HUMAN IS A TOOL IN GOD'S HANDS. "Having spent the previous year as David, I was suddenly cast as Goliath" (p. 108) is Obama's way of implying AN ELECTION CANDIDATE IS A BIBLICAL FIGURE.

Elections are an important aspect of a political life and the voters' choices influence various walks of life of the nation. They are featured very extensively in the analysed material. The election process, the candidates' success and failure are expressed in terms of copious metaphors. Again, the sporting metaphors can be identified, as listed below:

"polls showed me with a nearly twenty-point lead" (p. 50) – ELECTION PROCESS IS A RACE / COMPETITION;

"she threw her hat into a ring" (p. 24) – TAKING PART IN ELECTION IS A SPORTING ACTIVITY;

"we would have to pitch close to a perfect game" (p. 75) – RUNNING ELECTIONS IS PLAYING A GAME;

"the contest took a couple of unexpected turns" (p. 108) – a combination of two metaphoric projections CAMPAIGN IS A COMPETITION and RUNNING ELECTIONS IS DRIVING / NAVIGATING, as well as in "it was hard not to feel like we were in the driver's seat" (p. 108) – WINNING IS DRIVING A CAR.

The election process involves planning the campaign, i.e., "we began charting a possible path to the White House" (p. 75) – PLANNING ELECTION IS DRAWING A MAP / A ROUTE (the White House is a metonymy for 'US presidency / term in office as American president'). The outcomes of the election are decided upon voting, however "swing states and swing districts" (p. 66) are the undecided supporters, the expression generated on the basis of the metaphor UNDECIDED POLITICAL VOTERS ARE PEOPLE DANCING.

The goal of any political candidate running for any office is victory. The metaphors that are used to talk about such an outcome are RUNNING ELECTION IS ENGINE POWER / MECHANICAL POWER as exemplified by the expression "our victory propelled by unprecedented turnout" (p. 107), or WINNING IN ELECTION IS PRODUCING ELECTRICITY as in "victory had electrified the country" (p. 42); also VICTORY IS HARNESSING / CONTROLLING THE FORCES OF NATURE as illustrated by the expression "we would catch lightning in a bottle" (p. 82), or WINNING IS SEISMIC ACTIVITY which is visible in the phrase "the margin of victory [...] seismic" (p. 108).

The negative aspects of elections are highlighted in the expressions related to losing support and losing votes: "from the start the race was a disaster" (p. 37) – RUNNING FOR OFFICE / GETTING INTO ELECTION IS A CALAMITY; "you will get chewed up" (p. 29) – LOSING ELECTION IS GETTING EATEN; "got trounced" (p. 36) – LOSING SUPPORT IS RECEIVING PHYSICAL FORCE / VIOLENCE; "after getting drubbed [...]" (p. 39) – LOSING SUPPORT IS GETTING BEATEN SEVERELY; "lick my wounds" (p. 39) – A DEFEATED INDIVIDUAL IS A HURT ANIMAL; "winning this thing's going to take a while, [...] how to cauterise the wound" (p. 110) – LOSING IN ELECTION IS GETTING WOUNDED; "I could take a punch" (p. 57) – BEING DEFEATED IS LOSING A BOXING MATCH / RECEIVING BLOWS.

One of the important aspects of American cultural scripts is the belief in opportunities for the individual. Obama addresses his own worries, thoughts and doubts prior to taking part in large-scale political life. A numerous group of 61 metaphorical linguistic expressions refers to **human life, nature, emotions. Changes, expectations, decisions, ideas, and opinions** are present in 35 metaphorical linguistic expressions, whereas the **mind, learning, and experiences** as well as **work** and **success** are featured by 32 instances of metaphorical language use. He considers an individual and human life in the following ways.

In general, AN INDIVIDUAL IS A CONTAINER metaphor can be identified, with more detailed listings and exemplars of expressions being:

"filling me with longing" (p. 5) – AN INDIVIDUAL IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS;

"place faith in citizens" (p. xvi) – PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS INTO WHICH SUBSTANCE CAN BE PUT.

AN INDIVIDUAL IS A PIECE OF MACHINERY is the umbrella metaphor for the following subtypes and illustrative expressions:

"all of this pulled me in different directions" (p. 9) – A HUMAN IS AN OBJECT UNDER FORCES BEYOND CONTROL;

"I was [...] a combination of ill-fitting parts" (p. 9) – A HUMAN IS A PIECE OF MACHINERY / POORLY ASSEMBLED ITEM OF MACHINERY;

"we were counting on an early victory to catapult us past more seasoned opponents" (p. 81) – A HUMAN IS A MISSILE / AN OBJECT TO BE THROWN;

AN INDIVIDUAL IS AN ANIMAL is a metaphor that can be inferred from the examples below:

"To be a workhorse, not a show horse", "built like a panda bear" (p. 55) – A HUMAN IS AN ANIMAL;

"the strong preyed on the weak" (p. 78) – A STRONG INDIVIDUAL IS A PREDATOR.

CLOTH and clothes related associations are traceable in the instances to follow:

"the young professional, tailored and crisp" (p. 21) – A PROFESSIONAL IS A SKILLFULLY SEWN GARMENT;

"stitch my life together" (p. 9) – HUMAN LIFE IS A PIECE OF FABRIC.

A universal and all-encompassing LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is rendered in the linguistic metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors as evidenced by Obama's writing:

"situate myself along some firm axis" (p. 9) – HUMAN LIFE IS A STRAIGHT STEADY LINE;

"the city changed the arc of my life" (p. 15) – HUMAN LIFE IS A PATH;

"my path was now charted" (p. 19) – HUMAN LIFE IS A ROUTE ON A MAP;

"a strange chain of events" (p. 24) – EVENTS IN LIFE ARE A SEQUENCE OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS JOINED TOGETHER.

The human mind is considered to be a MACHINE, a CONTAINER for storage, and is referenced by Obama as follows:

"my mind resisting a simple linear narrative" (p. xiv) – A MIND IS AN ENTITY CAPABLE OF RESISTANCE // A STORY IS A LINE (OF THOUGHTS);

"to get my brain to operate" (p. 46), "my mind instinctively breaking every issue into a pile of components" (p. 83) – a combination of two metaphoric projections A BRAIN IS A PIECE OF MACHINERY and A MIND IS A MACHINE;

"her mind was still sharp" (p. 112) – INTELLECT IS A SHARP TOOL;

"Something approaching a worldview took shape in my mind." (p. 10) – A MIND IS A CONTAINER FOR IDEAS;

"memories would toss up seemingly incidental details" (p. xiv) – REMEMBERING THINGS IS JUGGLING / MOVING OBJECTS;

"a gifted writer" (p. xiv) – TALENT / SKILL IS A GIFT;

"marketable skills" (p. 20) – HUMAN ABILITIES ARE TRADE PRODUCTS.

Not surprisingly, human nature is metaphorically viewed as follows: HUMAN NATURE IS A COMPLEX OF GOOD AND BAD BEHAVIOUR / TRAITS, this conceptualisation is illustrated by the words "the better angels of our nature" (p. xvi).

In an attempt to consider himself as a person, a young politician, an inexperienced political player, Obama describes the process of his own making. The combinations of metaphorical expressions he employs to describe himself, his thinking and development as well as the metaphors that can be identified while producing such linguistic expressions are quite diverse. The following instances can be identified:

"the mask of tidiness" (p. xiii preface) – TIDINESS IS DISGUISE;

"key events that happened on my watch" (p. xiii pref.) – A POLITICIAN / PRESIDENT IS A GUARD;

"different strands of my mixed-up heritage" (p. xiv) – HERITAGE IS PATCHWORK;

"I'm painfully aware" (p. xiv) – AWARENESS IS PAIN;

"by hitching my wagon to something larger than myself" (p. xiv) – SUCCESS IS PHYSICAL LABOUR;

"a series of half-baked opinions" (p. 10) – UNSTEADY OPINION IS A PIECE OF POORLY BAKED BREAD / COOKIE;

"Something approaching a worldview took shape in my mind." (p. 10) – AN OUTLOOK IS A MATERIAL OBJECT (IN A CONTAINER);

"I was incubating" (thoughts) (p. 12) – THINKING IS GROWING AN IDEA;

Referring to ideas "let flourish in the hothouse of my youthful mind" (p. 12) – a combination of two metaphoric projections A YOUNG MIND IS A GREENHOUSE and DEVELOPING IDEAS IS GROWING PLANTS;

"purge softness with a regimen of self-improvement" (p. 13) – a combination of two metaphoric projections TRYING TO SELF-IMPROVE IS A MILITARY TECHNIQUE and SOFTNESS IS IMPURITY;

"marched to a different drummer" (p. 18) – a combination of two metaphoric projections FOLLOWING IDEALS IS MARCHING WITH A BAND and A LEADER IS A PACEMAKER;

"it felt like a trap" (p. 19) – REACHING SUCCESS IS GETTING INTO A TRAP;

"I had become a mere conduit through which [...]" (p. 49) – AN INDIVIDUAL IS ELECTRICAL WIRE.

From the above combination of associations, the reader can create a picture of a person with an open mind, need for change and a desire to improve self and others.

Obama's motto in the first campaign reads "Yes we can". He was willing to make changes to the system in hope of improving lives of millions of Americans. He frequently addresses the need to make various changes and employs the following expressions to illustrate the need. By stating "the changes that were sweeping not just Chicago" (p. 15) he conceptualises transformations as A CHANGE IS A CLEANING PROCEDURE (MAKING ROOM FOR THE NEW TO COME). Both "a movement for change [...] a deep swift current" (p. 16) as the exemplification of the metaphor

SOCIAL MOVEMENT IS A SWIFT-FLOWING RIVER, as well as "helping to shore up my downstate and liberal bases" (p. 46) representing CHANGES ARE TIDE WATER, are related to forces of nature contained in the waters of rivers and seas. On the other hand, the power of vegetation, as mirrored in the expression "this planted a seed" (p. 17), is the embodiment of the metaphor MAKING CHANGES IS GARDENING. This type of change implies development and growth. Changes are essential for improvement as much as food and light are necessary to live. The expression "the hunger for change in America" (p. 90) embodies the metaphor CHANGE IS FOOD. The statement "Axe would call it a symbolic passing of the torch" (p. 129) reflects the comparison PROGRESS / CHANGE IS LIGHT.

It is essential to point out that freedom of expression is another salient aspect of American culture. Politicians and public life are exposed to media scrutiny, and it is journalists' task to inform the public about diverse concerns affecting the life of the nation. Media attention is excessive in case of crucial life issues. **Media attention** and **media coverage** are exemplified by 24 metaphorical linguistic expressions. As in the case of many other features of social life presented so far, also in the case of media coverage, more of their negative aspects are foregrounded in the way Obama refers to their activity. Journalists' work is presented as follows:

"I was roundly flayed by press" (p. 37) – PRESS COVERAGE IS CAUSING PHYSICAL HARM;

"Ryan was flogged by the press" (p. 50) – A PRESS RELEASE IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT;

"he was later pilloried" (p. 50) – BEING CRITICISED IS BEING EXPOSED TO PUBLIC PUNISHMENT;

"allergic to the spotlight" (p. 55) – BEING IN THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION IS A HEALTH PROBLEM;

"a junior partner soaking up more press than them" (p. 56) – GETTING MEDIA ATTENTION IS ABSORBING SOMETHING;

"sometimes they will cloak it in religious terms" (p. 65) – DISGUIISING / HIDING INFORMATION IS DRESSING / MASKING;

"our Senate office was inundated with media requests" (p. 65) – INCOMING MAILS / NEWS IS A FLOOD;

"Family got dragged along for the ride, put in the line of fire" (p. 71) – GETTING UNWELCOME ATTENTION IS BEING UNDER SIEGE / BEING IN A MILITARY OPERATION;

"The press would be merciless in its scrutiny – "a non-stop colonoscopy" " (p. 76) – MEDIA ATTENTION IS A MEDICAL PROCEDURE;

"the media exploded yet again" (p. 109) – MEDIA BROADCAST IS A BOMB / AN EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL;

"words [...] could be [...] weaponized by the conservative media" (p. 134) – WORDS ARE WEAPONS;

"I may not have [...] heard [...] use such explosive language" (p. 141) – HATE SPEECH IS EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL.

Neutral or positive associations can be interpreted from the examples listed below:

"clips cycled to millions more via cable news shows" (p. 52) – SPREADING MEDIA NEWS IS REPEATING EVENTS REGULARLY;

"the spotlight brighter" (p. 57) – ATTENTION IS LIGHT;

"he drifted along some unrelated current before tacking back to his original course" (p. 69) – TELLING STORIES IS SAILING;

"the chatter began to seep through the cracks and crevices of our home life" (p. 69-70) – NEWS / INFORMATION IS LIQUID;

"it [...] sent the cable news pundits into orbit" (p. 109) – MEDIA COVERAGE / EXCEPTIONAL NEWS IS A SPACECRAFT;

"negative portrait of us [...] meant to feed a general nervousness" (p. 134) – PROVIDING INFORMATION IS PROVIDING FOOD.

The changes Obama wants to introduce are aimed at improving the lives of his fellow citizens. Another key aspect of crucial importance in bringing about social

development is learning and knowledge. Wisdom, acquired from learning and knowledge, is quite generally metaphorically likened to some strong force, e.g., WISDOM / INTELLECT IS FORCE as in the expression "I'd admired Bill's [...] talent and intellectual firepower" (p. 87). The process of learning is recognised in the metaphor PASSING KNOWLEDGE IS FILLING A CONTAINER as illustrated by the expression "my mother's sensibilities [...] she had funnelled into me" (p. 129). Knowledge is compared to human staples, such as the air we breathe or food we prepare and consume:

"inhaling the latest studies" (p. 86) – LEARNING IS BREATHING;

"I knew how to consume and process information" (p. 86) – KNOWLEDGE IS FOOD / LEARNING IS EATING;

"it was my general inability to boil issues down to their essence" (p. 86) – LEARNING IS COOKING;

"provide fodder for upcoming campaigns" (p.58) – IDEAS ARE FOOD.

The fact that it is not easy for everyone to get access to proper education is expressed in the words "he had scratched and clawed his way into college" (p. 56) based upon a metaphor GETTING EDUCATION IS FIGHTING A BATTLE. Many means are available if one wants to gain some knowledge, books and literature are one of them. Their merits are presented in the following expressions:

"find refuge in in books" (p. 9) – LITERARY OUTPUT IS SHELTER;

"before digging into crime and punishment" (p. 9) – A BOOK IS A GARDEN / READING IS GARDENING;

Referring to reading books "like a young tinkerer in [...] garage" (p. 10) – READING IS PICKING UP PIECES OF MACHINERY (FOR FURTHER USE) TO BE ASSEMBLED AT A LATER TIME.

American equality of opportunity as a significant cultural value can be identified in reference to work. An individual is the maker of own future, which is evidenced by the expression "carving out a career" (p. 7), representative of the metaphor CREATING

WORK OPPORTUNITIES IS SHAPING A MATERIAL WITH TOOLS. Diligent and devoted workers are compared to "a topflight staff" (p. 55): HIGH QUALITY OFFICE WORKERS ARE THE BEST / HIGHEST LEVEL EMPLOYEES. A successful and fulfilling job is an asset, however it may take some time to find the right and satisfying one. "I had to start somewhere and pay my dues" (p. 24) is based on the underlying metaphor TAKING UP NEW RESPONSIBILITIES IS FORCING YOURSELF TO DO SOMETHING YOU DO NOT ENJOY, while a phrase "ill-fitting jobs" (p. 14) relies on the mapping A JOB IS A POORLY-SEWN GARMENT. For Obama, the decision to take a new job in his early political career, i.e., run for Congress, is described as "dipping [...] toes in the water" (p. 24), featuring the mental imagery TAKING A NEW JOB OPPORTUNITY IS TESTING THE SITUATION.

Economic status and **financial situation** are instantiated by 29 occurrences of metaphorical language use. Stability of daily lives is conditioned by a comfortable financial situation. However, the financial crisis that was raging in the USA at the beginning of the New Millennium took a toll of many Americans' jobs, houses and their general strength. The above problems addressed by Obama are described in language referring to health issues and various aspects of military operations. Let us consider the instances of expressions accompanied by their metaphorical readings:

"chronic financial struggles" (p. 9) – a combination of two metaphoric projections FINANCIAL SITUATION IS A BATTLE and FINANCIAL PROBLEMS ARE A LONG ILLNESS / INCURABLE ILLNESS;

"chronically underfunded schools" (p. 16) – POOR FINANCIAL STATUS IS A DISEASE;

"Goldman Sachs, [...] were hemorrhaging capital at alarming rates" (p. 178), "it continued to hemorrhage" (p. 181) – LOSS OF MONEY IS BLEEDING;

"businesses large and small decided to retrench" (p. 178) – REDUCING EXPENDITURE IS MILITARY TACTIC;

"to give the economy a jolt" (p. 179) – IMPROVING ECONOMIC SITUATION IS DEALING AN ABRUPT BLOW;

"bank [...] went belly-up" (p. 179) – LOSING MONEY IS SURRENDERING / FAILING.

Losing financial stability is associated with BAD IS DOWN, as in "stocks plunged" (p. 181) LOSING MONEY IS JUMPING / FALLING RAPIDLY, or with being eaten up, such as in the expression "\$85 billion was now being consumed by an urgent government takeover" (p. 181) representing the metaphor MERGING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IS EATING.

ECONOMIC CRISIS IS A MACHINE is the metaphor on the basis of which the expression "the nuts and bolts of the crisis" (p. 182) was produced. The ability or attempt to remedy the problematic situation is the association with navigating the ship as if to leave the rough waters and sail onto calm seas, as exemplified in "steer the country through tough economic times" (p. 182) – OVERCOMING ECONOMIC CRISIS IS NAVIGATING / SAILING. In the above quoted expression "steering" can also refer to directing or navigating any other vehicle, such as a car, a truck, or even a plane.

A popular saying states that *money makes the world go round*. Such an interpretation is justified in the expression "small donors were helping to fuel our operation" (p. 130) based on metaphors RAISING MONEY IS SUPPLYING POWER FOR AN ENGINE or DONATION FUNDS ARE ENGINE FUEL. The difficulty of obtaining funds for political means is illustrated by the statement "begged strangers for money" (p. 84) representative of the metaphorical rendering RAISING FUNDS IS BEGGING.

5. Conclusions

It is impossible to quote and analyse all exemplars of metaphorical language use which are present in as massive a volume as Barack Obama's *A promised land*. The analysed part describing the first presidential campaign and the events preceding it includes over 360 exemplars of metaphorical linguistic expressions. Those instances are abundant

and their number clearly supports the common view of metaphors being universally employed in human language, either in its spoken or written form. A great number of identified examples of metaphorical language use and the underlying conceptual metaphors (over one-third) focus on the American political life, campaigning, and elections. However, considering the period preceding presidential elections, this is hardly surprising. Nearly a hundred instances of figurative language use are concerned with general features of human life and its nature, ideas, opinions, emotions, expectations as well as decisions made or yet to be taken. The significance of learning and experience as contingent on the power of the human mind and leading to success are evoked 32 times in various phrases and expressions. The focus on the financial situation and economic status is referenced nearly 30 times. The fourth power – the media – are referred to 24 times.

Obviously, any language of a culture and language community also reflects the outlook and worldview of such a group of people. Their beliefs and values are similarly articulated in literal as well as figurative modes of expression. What has to be stressed is that the cultural scripts that can be identified are the evidence of the common principles shared by a particular community, language or national group. It can be easily noted, that if a particular feature of life or value is essential to a community, it will be a part of its language repertoire. It has to be stressed that certain cultural scenarios are imprinted in Obama's speech. As will be shown below, such cultural scenarios include competitiveness and sportsmanship, freedom of expression and personal freedom, the power of knowledge and intellect, the power of achievement and individual attempts at succeeding as well as respect for the military forces and their devotion to defend democracy.

Sport and sportsmanship are important aspects of American culture hence they are so readily featured in metaphorical expressions relating to Americans' daily and political lives. As the numerous examples that have been analysed show, GAME and SPORT metaphors are very often employed to refer to political life, political campaigns, and

elections. This can be interpreted by the fact that both sports, games and taking part in elections are competitive by nature. Other aspects that can be identified here are losing or winning, which are also inherent in both sporting activities and competitions as well as in political campaigns and elections while running for office. The number of sports metaphors used with reference to political life and elections are the tell-tale evidence of the significance of sportsmanship in American culture. Sadly, politicians are frequently portrayed in an unfavourable way.

The freedom of speech and all forms of expression, so widely proclaimed and implemented in America, are often addressed in Obama's commentary on American life. This very aspect of American life is of fundamental significance, and it can be easily identified as the American cultural script and also as a notion featuring in the national anthem. Regrettably, as evidenced by the examples quoted from the memoir, mainly the predatory nature of journalism, some press coverages, and media broadcasts are brought to attention. However, the attitudes of politicians as well as the media can be noted as a global feature, and they are not specific to American culture only.

Americans are also portrayed as achievers and any individual attempts are always highly appreciated and valued in their society. The power of the human mind and knowledge are their core values; therefore, it comes as no surprise that Obama's work often makes use of those imageries. The human mind is portrayed in metaphors as a piece of machinery and container for ideas.

American respect for their military forces is another substantial feature to be mentioned. In the analysed material, a lot of metaphorical expressions are related to military language, including battlefield, combat and various other tactics. Such imagery is adopted to describe political life, the process of conquering problems and handling the financial crisis. The American respect for their military forces, their dedication to protect freedom and their mission to defend democracy constitute a strong cultural script.

Such is the picture of America presented by Obama at the onset of his first term in office. It would be greatly interesting to compare the President's vision of America in the period preceding his service and how it is viewed afterwards; whether the changes he so greatly hoped to introduce have materialised and taken the shape of the 'promised land' he dreamed of so much. The study to follow should focus on the description of the period of Obama's presidency and identifying if, and how, the perception of America during his time in office has changed. The change will likely be reflected in the language used to comment on daily reality.

The cultural scripts that emerge from the analysed material are the importance of sporting activity, the competitive character of political life, the battling of opposing teams, all forms of freedom, respect for the military and the classical universal conception of LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

The widespread use of metaphor is recognised in language employed to address various walks of human life and its conceptual nature is confirmed. The results of the research study testify to the fact that language and culture and the conceptualisations that are created in the human mind to name and describe the reality surrounding them are all interconnected and permeate all stages of linguistic description.

Notes

1. As referenced by *Oxford English dictionary*, the Promised Land is "the land of Canaan, as promised to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:7, 13:15, etc.) [...] (hence in extended use) a place or situation of expected happiness, esp. heaven" (OED, *s.a.*).

2. Kövecses clarifies the difference between linguistic and nonlinguistic factors in the following words: "The contextual factors that are most commonly distinguished in the literature fall into two large groups: linguistic and nonlinguistic. The linguistic factors are often referred to as 'cotext', and it seems to be the clearer type. It is the discourse that surrounds (mostly precedes) the use of a particular metaphorical expression. The

term that is used to denote the nonlinguistic factors is simply 'context'. However, the term context is often used for both types of factors, linguistic and nonlinguistic, that influence the production and comprehension of metaphors" (2015: 2).

List of abbreviations

OED – Oxford English dictionary

References

1. Bartmiński, J. (2009). *Aspects of cognitive ethnolinguistics*. London: Equinox Publishing.
2. Best, J. (2018). *American nightmares. Social problems in an anxious world*. Oakland: University of California Press.
3. Blanke, D. (2000). *Sowing the American dream. How consumer culture took root in the rural Midwest*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
4. Borstelmann, T. (2020). *Just like us. The American struggle to understand foreigners*. New York: Columbia University Press.
5. Caldwell, W.W. (2007). *Cynicism and the evolution of the American dream*. Washington: Potomac Books.
6. Cameron, L. & Maslen, R. (2010). Identifying metaphors in discourse data. In *Metaphor analysis: Research practice in applied linguistics, social sciences and the humanities*. Cameron, L. & Maslen, R. (eds.). London – Oakville: Equinox, p. 97-115.
7. Dancygier, B., Sanders, J. & Vandelanotte, L. (2012). Textual choices in discourse: Emerging views from cognitive linguistics. In *Textual choices in discourse: A view from cognitive linguistics*. Dancygier, B., Sanders, J. & Vandelanotte, L. (eds). Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins, p. 185-192.
8. Duranti, A. (2003). Language as culture in US anthropology: Three paradigms. In *Current anthropology*, 44 (3), p. 323-347. DOI: [10.1086/368118](https://doi.org/10.1086/368118)
9. Duranti, A. (2009). The relevance of Husserl's theory to language socialization. In *Journal of linguistic anthropology*, 19 (2), p. 205-226. DOI: [10.1111/j.1548-1395.2009.01031.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1395.2009.01031.x)

10. Evans, V. (2007). *A glossary of cognitive linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
11. Gooding, F.W. Jr. (2018). *American dream deferred*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
12. Halliday, M. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. 1st ed. London: Arnold.
13. Językowy obraz świata [Linguistic worldview]. In *Obyczaje, języki, ludy świata. Encyklopedia PWN*. (2007). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, p. 367.
14. Kövecses, Z. (2006). *Language, mind, and culture. A practical introduction*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.
15. Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.
16. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.
17. Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture. Universality and variation*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.
18. Kövecses, Z. (2018). Metaphor in media language and cognition: A perspective from conceptual metaphor theory. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, III (1), June 2018, p. 124-141. DOI: [10.2478/lart-2018-0004](https://doi.org/10.2478/lart-2018-0004)
19. Kövecses, Z. (2015). *Where metaphors come from. Reconsidering context in metaphor*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.
20. Kramsch, C. (2015). Language and culture in second language learning. In *The Routledge handbook of language and culture*. Sharifian, F. (ed.). London – New York: Routledge, p. 403-416.
21. Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
22. Martynyuk, A. & Meleshchenko, O. (2019). Twitter-based multimodal metaphorical memes portraying Donald Trump. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow*.

The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, IV (2), December 2019, p. 128-167.

23. Mills, S. (2015). Language, culture, and politeness. In *The Routledge handbook of language and culture*. Sharifian, F. (ed.). London – New York: Routledge, p. 129-140.

24. Morozova, O. (2017). Monomodal and multimodal instantiations of conceptual metaphors of Brexit. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, II (2), December 2017, p. 250-283. DOI: [10.1515/lart-2017-0017](https://doi.org/10.1515/lart-2017-0017)

25. Obama, B. (2020). *A promised land*. New York: Penguin Random House.

26. Panasenko, N., Greguš, L. & Zabuzhanska, I. (2018). Conflict, confrontation, and war reflected in mass media: Semantic wars, their victors and victims. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Poland, III (2), December 2018, p. 132-163. DOI: [10.2478/lart-2018-0017](https://doi.org/10.2478/lart-2018-0017)

27. Peeters, B. (2016). Applied ethnolinguistics is cultural linguistics, but is it cultural linguistics? In *International journal of language and culture*, 3 (2), p. 137-160.

28. *Promised Land*. Available at:

<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/267598?redirectedFrom=promised+land#eid>

29. *Chasing the American dream: New perspectives on affordable homeownership*. (2007). Rohe, W.M. & Watson, H.L. (eds.). Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press.

30. Samuel, L.R. (2017). *The American way of life: A cultural history*. Madison – Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

31. Sharifian, F. (2011). *Cultural conceptualisations and language: Theoretical framework and applications*. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

32. Sharifian, F. (2017). *Cultural linguistics. Cultural conceptualisations and language*. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

33. Stashko, H., Prykhodchenko, O., Čábyová, L. & Vrabec, N. (2020). Media images of Slovak and Ukrainian presidents: 'I/we' binary pronominal opposition in political speeches. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of*

University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, V (1), June 2020, p. 350-389.

34. Trask, R.L. (1995). *A dictionary of grammatical terms in linguistics*. London – New York: Routledge.

35. Uberman, A. & Uberman, Z. (2021). Selected female kinship terms in Polish, English, and Chinese: A contrastive perspective. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, VI (2), December 2021, p. 202-254.


36. Underhill, J.W. (2012). *Ethnolinguistics and cultural concepts: Truth, love, hate and war*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

37. Wierzbicka, A. (1992). *Semantics, culture, and cognition. Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.

38. Wierzbicka, A. (2015). Language and cultural scripts. In *The Routledge handbook of language and culture*. Sharifian, F. (ed.). London – New York: Routledge, p. 339-357.

39. Winograd, M. & Hais, M. D. (2011). *Millennial momentum. How a new generation is remaking America*. New Brunswick – New Jersey – London: Rutgers University Press.

Contact data

	<p><i>name:</i> <i>academic title / rank:</i> <i>department:</i> <i>institution:</i> <i>e-mail:</i> <i>fields of interest:</i></p>	<p>Agnieszka Uberman PhD in Linguistics Associate Professor Institute of Modern Languages University of Rzeszów Al. mjr W. Kopisto 2B, 35-315 Rzeszów, Poland ag.uberman@wp.pl; auberman@ur.edu.pl Cognitive linguistics, frame semantics, applied linguistics, metaphorical language use, linguo-cultural differences, contrastive paremiology.</p>
---	---	---

Résumé

Conceptual metaphors are present in human language and thought and are the way language users conceptualise the reality around them. The language used to address

any issue or concept is often metaphorical in character. The paper discusses how America, its politics, social system and Americans' values are viewed by Barack Obama in his presidential memoir *A promised land*. The cultural scripts that can be identified for American society are briefly outlined and the cultural components that the language contains are sketched out. The image of America that Obama describes in his book is full of metaphorical linguistic expressions that are the embodiment of conceptual metaphors. American values are also reflected in the discussed material. Democracy and the rule of law are the prevalent ideals, and they are extensively discussed by Obama with reference to political campaigning and elections. Regrettably, the image of political life and political activity is not very positive. A lot of attention is devoted to the respect Americans express towards their military forces, hence a large number of metaphors used by Obama have military overtones. Knowledge and education as well as freedom of speech (as exemplified by media coverages) are the core values that are also addressed in the memoir. Similarly to the way politicians are portrayed, the media are also shown in a rather negative light. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY has been identified as one of the most prevalent conceptualisations bringing together the way people think, the culture they live in, and the way they express views and opinions. The most frequently used metaphors are related to political life and human life in general. The cultural scripts that emerge from the analysed material are those of sportsmanship and competitiveness, freedom, respect for the military, and individualistic American culture.

Keywords: conceptual metaphors, linguistic metaphorical expressions, values, cultural scripts, *A promised land*.