Being in the same boat, in two ways

Conflict metaphors in health care

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In research on conflicts, the systematic study of metaphors is playing an increasingly prominent role. In the context of a U.S. – Swiss–Hungarian international collaboration investigating conflicts through interviews with healthcare professionals, the present chapter analyzes linguistic and conceptual metaphors in Hungarian interviews. The theoretical background for the analysis is provided by the cognitive theory of metaphor, while its methodology is based on MIPVU.

Moving away from linguistic representations, this study aims to analyze the role of metaphors in the conceptualization, interpretation, and management of conflicts. The chapter presents general, conventionalized orientational and ontological metaphors of conflict, also exploring the core metaphors of the metaphor families of COMPETITION and COOPERATION as well as correlations between conflicts and power structures.

Keywords: competition, cooperation, metaphor family, (re-)framing

> Conflict can be either bad or good.
> Conflict presents danger and opportunity.
> (Hocker–Wilmot, 2017, p. 39)

1. Introduction

Efficient communication, conflict management and cooperation are key factors of successful patient care. However, a growing body of research has shown that the interprofessional practice of healthcare professionals is often stressful, mired by conflicts, unaddressed, and unresolved problems (Kim et al., 2017; Bochatay et al., 2017; Cullati et al., 2019). These conflicts may have a negative impact on both patient care and the wellbeing of the professionals involved. Thus, rather than assuming an idealized setting of cooperation (which is often the case in medical

training), it is worth assessing the typical conflicts that health care workers experience, which may be a first step towards the management of challenging situations.

Conflicts arise when a person's interests clash with those of another person, and this prevents them from achieving their goals; or several people may claim on the same limited resource; or two or more people's value systems, priorities and attitudes are incompatible with each other. Conflicts may occur at several levels within the same organization. It is possible to distinguish between intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, with the latter developing either within a group or between two different groups (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Conflicts necessarily arise in all work place environments, thus also in health care. All the more so, because patient care requires the concerted effort of several professions, which is hindered by the high level of stress that comes with healthcare work. As a result, there is an enhanced risk of conflicts arising between healthcare professionals (Leever et al., 2010).

Conflict management and communication between healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, and other personnel) is absolutely vital for the success of patient care. An organizational morale based on cooperation lowers the risk of human errors, enhances efficiency as well as patient safety, last but not least has a cost-reducing effect (Paradis & Whitehead, 2015). In view of the above, it is crucial to gain a better understanding of conflicts in health care so that an adequate strategy can be developed for improving the situation.

In the context of an international research project investigating conflicts in health care (Kim et al., 2016; Bochatay et al., 2017; Csupor et al., 2017), the present chapter explores conflicts reported by Hungarian professionals, and aims to highlight the role of metaphors in the conceptualization, interpretation and management of conflicts. In line with this objective, the chapter discusses the relationship between conflicts and metaphors (Section 2) and presents the empirical material and the method of metaphor analysis (Section 3). Section 4 gives an overview of the major types of metaphors (CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER or MOTION, CONFLICT IS AN OBJECT or A PROCESS/EVENT) and metaphor families (for conceptualizing COMPETITION and COOPERATION) which appear in the conflicts of healthcare professionals. A separate subsection is devoted to figurative features of conflicts and power (Section 4.5). Finally, the chapter summarizes the results of metaphor analysis and offers concluding remarks (Section 5).

2.   Conflicts and metaphors

Conflicts naturally accompany our existence as social beings through all spheres of life (family, workplace, institutions, literature, etc.). Conflicts are characterized both by general features and specific ones derived from the social situation (Boulding, 1963). According to the definition of Boulding (1963) and Deutsch (2014), conflicts arise when the goals, expectations and interests of people are perceived as incompatible (Kim et al., 2017). Conflicts are closely intertwined with communication in the following ways: "communication behavior often creates conflict, communication behavior reflects conflict, communication is the vehicle for the productive or destructive management of conflict" (Hocker & Wilmot, 2017, p. 4). Hence, communication is a key factor for the understanding and management of conflicts.

Conflicts may be regarded as complex events involving incompatibility as a central component of their general schema or script (Schank & Abelson, 1977). Incompatibility may pertain to a variety of factors including approaches to solving a task, personality traits, evaluative attitudes to a given entity, emotions, etc. The core element or source of conflict is thus incompatibility, which is linked to a particular entity (object, person, event, etc.) in some fashion. Interpersonal conflicts presuppose at least two participants and explicit or implicit effect (possibly both), which also involve, the individual or group management of the situation engendered by conflict. The latter includes five basic types, namely competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating strategies (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975), with their names reflecting the fact that the linguistic construal and interpretation of conflicts (as complex events) often relies on metaphors. At the same time, conflicts also function as cultural scripts, defined by Wierzbicka (2015, p. 339) as "representations of cultural norms which are widely held in a given society and are reflected in language." Conflicts have a range of conventionalized and culturally defined features, which are highly amenable to linguistic documentation. Accordingly, the description of conflicts is a multi-level, complex enterprise: It is possible to address (i) conflicts as particular events; (ii) the interpretation of conflicts; and (iii) conflict management and the behavior of participants within it. Cultural norms and patterns play a role at all three levels.

According to McCorkle and Mills (1992, p. 57), "metaphors can function as models for how conflicts should be negotiated." Metaphors and, more generally, the way in which we talk about conflicts function as frames both culturally and at the level of interpreting specific conflicts. Frames aid the organization and understanding of experiences (Goffmann, 1974). By metonymically highlighting certain features, they help process complex phenomena in a simplified, schematic manner. However, this also contributes to the "conservation" of certain features. This is also the case with the word *conflict*, which itself has a metaphorical basis, having been derived from the Latin verb *confligere* 'hit together' (Benkő, 1970).

Here, incompatibility (difference of opinions) is construed as physical aggression, which serves as a basis of symbolization in one of the most common metaphors, CONFLICTS ARE BATTLES, WARS. In accordance with this original semantic structure, the word *conflict* often evokes a negative interpretation even by itself.

There are also several other groups of highly conventionalized metaphors derived from general features of conflicts, which function as cultural models for conflict interpretation (Holland–Quinn, 1987; Shore, 1996). For example, conflicts are typically processes unfolding in time (CONFLICTS ARE PROCESSES), which have both a beginning and an end, and which are characteristically shared, related in a narrative form (CONFLICTS ARE STORIES). Similarly to other states construed as circumstances, conflicts are often conventionally conceptualized in space as CONTAINERS. In addition, conceptualizations more closely related to the context of conflicts can also be observed. Beyond expressing general features of conflicts, these assign a more prominent role to factors specific to the linguistic as well as conceptual construal of a given situation (e.g. PROFESSORS ARE FEUDAL LORDS (16a)).

In both the analysis and management of conflicts, metaphors play an increasingly prominent role (McCorkle & Mills, 1992; Hamburger & Itzhayek, 1998; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017). Metaphors also appear in the literature on conflicts in healthcare settings and in healthcare practices as well (Stein et al., 1990; Hodgkin, 1995; Gibbs & Franks, 2002; Mitchell et al., 2003; Weaver, 2013; Semino et. al, 2018, etc.). This is partly due to the fact that "metaphors express, reflect, and reinforce different ways of making sense of particular aspects of our lives" (Semino et al., 2018, p. 625). Metaphors convey the way people perceive, remember, and analyze information they receive. Metaphors have a certain 'framing power,' which is related to the background knowledge, expectations, associations and linguistic constructions associated with the conceptual domains involved (Semino, et al, 2018, pp. 627–628). However, any single metaphor limits people's perception; in other words it has a perspectivizing effect: Source domains highlight certain features of target domains while hiding others (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 10–14). For example, the metaphor CONFLICT IS A BATTLE highlights the negative, competitive aspect of conflicts while hiding opportunities for cooperation.

In their study of conflicts in organizations and institutions, Hamburger and Itzhayek (1998, p. 383) claim that "much of the conflict in the organization is caused by people holding different metaphors." This may also apply to conflicts in other environments. The way a conflict is expressed metaphorically creates a certain perception of the situation and related feelings, attitudes: What can happen, what will happen, what should happen, and with what kind of feeling behavior takes place (McCorkle & Mills, 1992).

The systematic analysis of metaphors may facilitate a better understanding of conflict situations, thus also allowing for efficient conflict management; they may

even be a catalyst of change. According to Hocker and Wilmot (2017) metaphors can serve as "diagnostic tools" in conflict management. This has been demonstrated in several analyses of practical issues such as the management of organizational conflicts (Cleary & Packard, 1992; Hamburger & Itzhayek, 1998) and the understanding as well as the treatment of problems arising when young people make career choices (Creed & Nacey, 2021).

Whether conflicts are evaluated positively or negatively is a central concern of research on conflicts. Conflict interactions can indeed be constructive, productive or destructive depending on many factors, including the context in which it occurs (Deutsch 2014; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017). Nevertheless, conflicts are typically interpreted as negative, destructive phenomena weakening collaboration, problem solving and communication between the participants, as suggested by both everyday feedback and research results. However, conflicts can in fact be positive and constructive as well. They can lead to better judgment, decision making and understanding of others' positions, and can also improve team performance and facilitate stronger team cohesion (Kim et al., 2017).

A negative evaluation of conflicts is also manifested at the level of metaphors. Hocker and Wilmot (2017, pp. 49–60) observe that negative metaphors appear to dominate interpersonal conflicts. Examples include DANGER, WAR, BULLYING, EXPLOSIVE, TRIAL, WILD ACT OF NATURE, ANIMAL BEHAVIOR, MESS, GAME, COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN, HEROIC ADVENTURE, BALANCING ACT, BARGAINING TABLE. By contrast, BARGAINING TABLE, TIDE, DANCE, GARDEN, and MUSICAL IMPROVISATION can be described as collaborative concepts of conflict. Crum (1987), for his part, talks about "five mindsets in conflict situations" rather than conflict metaphors. These include DESTRUCTION, DECAY, SURVIVAL and the positive schemas of SUCCESS and ARTISTRY. He emphasizes the fact that these "mind sets" (metaphors) help participants re-frame conflict situations, allowing them to learn new ways of thinking and acting.

These lines of investigation increasingly draw on the cognitive theory of metaphor (cf. Lakoff & Jonson, 1980; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987, Turner, 1987; Lakoff & Turner, 1989, etc.) and the methods of corpus linguistic research on metaphor (Steen et al., 2010), which also inform the present analysis. Accordingly, metaphor is considered as a mapping between conceptual domains which aids the processing and systematization of encyclopedic knowledge. Metaphor is a mental operation, which is conceptual and linguistic at the same time. Generally it is based on everyday experience, and offers an analogical way of representing knowledge about the world in language. Characteristically, metaphors facilitate the understanding of abstract notions by allowing them to be mentally accessed through the properties of more concrete phenomena. This process is significantly shaped by socio-cultural context (Holland & Quinn, 1987; Kövecses, 1999, 2005; Gibbs, 1999, etc.).

3. Data and method

The present chapter focuses on conflicts experienced by Hungarian healthcare professionals, studied within the context of an international (American-Swiss-Hungarian) research project (Kim et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2017; Bochatay et al., 2017, Csupor et al., 2017). The Hungarian research material consisted of interviews recorded with 25 nurses and 50 doctors (between 2014 and 2016), conducted on the basis of the American-Swiss joint protocol. In the 75 interviews, the informants shared 144 conflict stories, of which 91 occurred with co-workers, with the remaining ones typically involving patients or their relatives. Over the course of data collection, we did not give our informants prior instruction as to what kinds of conflicts they should discuss, neither did we provide a definition of conflicts for them. Accordingly, the stories reflect the participants' own interpretation and lived experiences of conflicts, with strong implications for their metaphoric conceptualizations of conflict. The interviews were subjected to content analysis with two independent coders working with qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti 7.[1] The subsequent analysis looked into the types, sources, manners of unfolding, and effects of medical conflicts (Csupor et al., 2017), also exploring conflict management strategies and their association with the use of metaphors. In this study, we performed metaphor analysis based on the methodology for linguistic metaphor identification (MIPVU: Metaphor Identification Process Vrije Universiteit, University of Amsterdam; Steen et al., 2010) on randomly selected interviews shared by 15 doctors and 15 nurses, examining 854 linguistic metaphors associated with conflicts.[2] Beside metaphors, we also analyzed other expressions playing a part in the semantic network of conflicts, including synonymous words and collocations which contribute to the elaboration of conflicts (e.g. *problem, situation, conflict circle, story*). These often also indicate what kinds of conventionalized meanings and attitudes are associated with conflicts.

   Our qualitative analysis did not aim for the annotation of all metaphoric expressions appearing in the interviews, rather, it only analyzed linguistic representations that were strongly related to the linguistic as well as conceptual construal of conflicts. Accordingly, the presented examples are always closely linked to the elaboration of conflicts. When it comes to the link between conflicts and power

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1.   The two independent coders were Éva Csupor and Ágnes Kuna.

2.   In examples, linguistic metaphors are consistently marked by underlining in both Hungarian and English, even though the structural patterns of the two languages do not necessarily correspond to each other from a grammatical perspective. For each example, we specify the number of the interview and the profession of the informant: MD (medical doctor), N (nurse), HN (Head nurse).

structures, the broader context of conflicts is explored (Section 4.5); however, in the case of general categories (Sections 4.1–4.4), it does not receive detailed analysis.

"Metaphor in cognitive linguistics is a two-way affair: it can go from linguistic metaphor to conceptual metaphor, or from conceptual metaphor to linguistic metaphor" (Steen & Gibbs, 1999, p. 1). The present study follows the former route, i.e., it uses linguistic metaphors as a point of departure for describing the conceptualization of conflicts, which in turn may crucially inform their understanding and management (Hocker & Wilmot, 2017). In metaphor analysis, we primarily follow the methodological principle adopted by Semino and her colleagues (Semino et al., 2004), which builds on Steen (1999) at several steps but places more emphasis on context and the role of conventionalized metaphors, relying on corpus data. For the latter aspect of our analysis, we use the Hungarian National Corpus (Oravecz et al., 2014).

The main questions of our research are the following:

1. What kinds of metaphors appear in the conflict stories of healthcare professionals?
2. What is the role of metaphors in the conceptualization of conflicts?
3. How is power distributed in metaphors?
4. Can metaphors play a role in conflict management?

4. Conflict metaphors

Conflicts cannot be interpreted without taking into account their cultural and social contexts (LeBaron, 2014). In essence, conflicts can be considered as socio-cultural concepts, as cultural models or scripts (Wierzbicka, 2015).

> Cultural models are constructed as mental representations in the same way as any mental models with the important exception that the internalization of cultural models is based on more socially constrained experiences than is the case for idiosyncratic models. (Shore, 1999, p. 7)

Several culturally embedded, conventionalized views and metaphors pertain to conflicts, which also influence attitudes to conflict management. These include such paradigm examples of metaphors for conflict (Coleman, 2014) as political (CONFLICT IS WAR/GAME), medical (CONFLICT IS A DISEASE), biological (CONFLICT IS A LIVING ENTITY), and communication metaphors (CONFLICT IS A STORY), etc.

These cultural models and general beliefs are often linguistically represented and transmitted in conventionalized ways in the semantic network of conflicts (e.g. *dolog* 'thing', *baj* 'trouble', *gond* 'concern', *probléma* 'problem', *nézeteltérés*

'disagreement'), foregrounding, metonymically or metaphorically construing prototypical features of conflicts. For example, a conflict may be construed negatively, as a narrative, a thing, etc., foregrounding particular dimensions of the cultural script of conflicts. This is illustrated by (1a), (b).

(1) a. *oltári nagy probléma* 'enormous **problem**'   (Int. 2, MD)
     b. ilyen ***helyzetet mesélj el*** '**tell** me about a **situation** like **this**'   (Int. 5, MD)

The present study explores conceptual metaphors appearing in conflict stories shared by healthcare professionals, putting a premium on the analysis of conceptual domains globally characterizing conflicts (CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER, CONFLICT IS A PROCESS, CONFLICT IS COMPETITION etc.). In addition, a separate subsection is devoted to metaphoric conceptualizations of power, the reason being that in American, Swiss and Hungarian conflict stories alike, conflicts correlate strongly with relationships of power. This also suggests that attitudes to power may also constitute a central aspect of conflict management.

4.1   CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER, CONFLICT IS MOTION

The analysis of metaphors appearing in conflict stories has shown that, in the conceptual and linguistic elaboration of conflicts, a prominent role is played by physical experiences and by the associated image schemas. An image schema is a "recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (Johnson, 1987, p. xiv). This involves the conceptualization of conflicts as CONTAINERS, as OBJECTS, with SPACE and especially the UP-DOWN orientational metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) also forming the basis of more complex conceptual structures such as hierarchy (see Section 4.5).

Conflicts can have numerous space related-linguistic representations. Especially frequent, and linguistically highly conventionalized, is the construal of conflicts as CONTAINERS, which often involves the joint elaboration of BEING INSIDE, BEING OUTSIDE, MOVEMENT, or AVOIDANCE (2a)–(e).

In Hungarian, these are typically construed by nouns with locative suffixes or verbs with preverbs (2a)–(e). In constructions like this, verbs (e.g. *lép* 'step') and proverbs (e.g. *ki* 'out') are both metaphorical; moreover, the case suffix (e.g. *-ből*) and the stem (*helyzet* 'situation') are also metaphorical components. Hence, these need to be registered as linguistic representations of metaphoric construal (cf. Simon et al. 2019).

(2) a. *kilépnék a helyzetből*
         'I would like to **step out** of the **situation**'   (Int. 4, MD)
     b. *be kellene lépni a dologba*
         'we should **step into this thing**'   (Int. 2, MD)

c. *miért kellett **ebbe bevonni** mást*
   'why did you **involve** others **in this**?' (Int. 4, MD)

d. *egy kicsit **belevonultam ebbe** a dologba, ebbe a konfliktuskörbe*
   'I got a little **involved in** this **situation**, in this **conflict cycle**'
   (Int. 10, MD)

e. *vagy **elkerülöd** és megcsinálod vagy **belemész** egy **helyzetbe***
   'either you **avoid** this **situation** and do your job or you **get into it**'
   (Int. 5, MD)

Strongly related to the inside/outside spatial relation is the OVERTNESS/OPENNESS of conflicts, which was often mentioned in the interviews *(nyílt konfliktus, nyitott konfliktus* 'overt/open conflict'). At the other extreme, COVERTNESS/CLOSEDNESS has not been conventionalized in the linguistic elaboration of conflicts. In the interviews, the phrases *rejtett konfliktus* 'hidden conflict' and *nem vállalta fel nyíltan* 'he/she was not open about it' are attested.

4.2 CONFLICT IS AN OBJECT

Conflicts are often conceptualized as OBJECTS, which may have a variety of features. They may be heavy, awkward, and they may have size, depth, arrangement, etc. The processes associated with these entities add further specification to the features of conflicts (an entity which can be carried, transferred from one place to another, etc.).

(3) a. *azért ennyire nem voltak **mélyek** a **dolgok**, hogy el kelljen menni táppénzre*
   'but **things** weren't that **deep** that I would have needed to go on sick leave'
   (Int. 25, N)

b. *haza is **hoztam***
   'I **brought it** home too' (Int. 1, MD)

c. *nem olyan **könnyű***
   '**it**'s not so **easy**' (Int. 2, MD)

d. *a **legnagyobb** konfliktus*
   'the **biggest** conflict' (Int. 2, MD)

e. *terheli az otthoniakat **ezzel***
   'he **bothers** his family with **it**' (Int. 3, MD)

f. *Szerette volna **átteni rám***
   'she wanted to **put it on me**' (Int. 4, MD)

In these cases too, the INSIDE and OUTSIDE metaphors occur in an (almost) conventionalized manner, with the conflict appearing as an object either inside a participant or outside her/him (4a)–(e). It is also possible for a linguistic metaphor to contribute to the elaboration of multiple conceptual metaphors. In (4d), conflicts *gets washed out* of the soul, which is at the same time both movement out of the body and getting rid of some negative thing, a process of "cleaning". This is also

shown by concordances extracted from the Hungarian National Corpus (Oravecz et al., 2014). Typically it is dirt, filth, sin, anger and forgotten knowledge, memories which "get washed out". The verb *lenyel* 'swallow' appearing in (4e) is also metaphorical. One primarily swallows food, drinks and pills. However, a conventionalized metaphorical meaning of *lenyel* 'swallow' also appears, which generally refers to the silent, reluctant acceptance of negative things (*failure, anger, word, thoughts*) rather than releasing them, letting go of them from within (Oravecz et al., 2014). The two examples have it in common that they elaborate conflict by the inside and outside relations, movement and by an entity which is undesirable, associated with negative evaluation. In the case of *kimosódik* 'get washed out', this is construed in a predominantly passive way, whereas *lenyel* 'swallow' designates a type of volitional action.

(4) a. *bennem van konfliktus*
'the conflict is **inside me**' (Int. 4, MD)

b. *belső konfliktus*
'**inside** conflict' (in several interviews)

c. *kiizélem magamból*
'I'll **get** it **out**' (Int. 2, MD)

d. *a konfliktus kimosódott a lelkemből*
'the conflict **got washed out of my soul**' (Int. 16, N)

e. *magunkban tartjuk és lenyeljük*
'we keep it **in ourselves** and **swallow it**' (Int. 19, N)

4.3 CONFLICT IS A PROCESS/EVENT[3]

As a further important feature, conflicts are also fundamentally processual, having a temporal dimension to them. A conflict begins with the onset of incompatibility, and ends when this incompatibility is brought to an end or managed in some way; or as the case may be, sometimes it fails to be settled. The processual nature of conflicts is highlighted by numerous metaphoric expressions of general use:

(5) a. *És ennek a dolognak aztán csak úgy lett vége*
'and this **thing ended** with […]' (Int. 1, MD)

b. *a konfliktus után*
'**after** the conflict' (Int. 10, MD)

c. *konfliktus során*
'**during** a conflict' (Int. 18, N)

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3. Note that metaphors related to movement also portray processes. Particular groups can be linked at several levels. In this section, we highlight conventionalized metaphors related to the temporality of conflicts, i.e. their unfolding in time.

    d.   *megszakadt a konfliktushelyzet*
        'the **conflict situation came to an abrupt end**'   (Int. 1, MD)

The popular metaphor CONFLICT IS A STORY is also grounded in the processual conceptualization and narrative processing of conflicts (cf. (1b), (6a), (b)) (Hocker & Wilmot, 2017, pp. 60–62; Winsdale & Monk, 2001). Based on the MIPVU method, the CONFLICTS ARE STORIES metaphor is not necessarily interpretable as a metaphor, since it is part of the basic meaning of a *story* that it is "a coherent series of past events that is told or written or possibly presented in some other way" (Pusztai et al., 2003). However, STORY is a typical way of construing conflicts, which can be generally shared, interpreted, and processed through the verbal medium.

  (6) a.   *az volt a **történet***
          'that was the **story**'   (Int. 2, MD)
      b.   *mesélnék* [*konfliktust*], *de nincs több*
          '**I'd like to tell** about [conflicts], but I don't have more'   (Int. 10, MD)

4.4   Conflict metaphors – negative framing

As the previous subsections have shown, a key role is played in the construal of conflict as an abstract process by concrete experiences concerning space, time, and events, with several ontological and orientational metaphors involved (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In many cases, these are evoked by conventionalized linguistic expressions in conflict-related interactions.

    In the data, numerous other conflict metaphors appear, e.g., CONFLICT IS A MESS, A DISEASE, POISON, PAIN, FOOD or A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE, e.g. FIRE OR A GAME. Many of these structural metaphors may be interpreted as members of a broader metaphor family bringing together and construing general experiences. Morgan (2008, pp. 487–488) uses the term *metaphor family* to refer to an abstract, broad experiential schema which unites a number of core metaphors. Such abstract schemas include COMPETITION and COOPERATION, which are crucial for the description of conflicts.

    In line with previous investigations, our empirical material reveals that conflict metaphors are typically associated with negative concepts. Negative vs. positive framing may have a significant influence on emotions and decision-making in particular situations (see Section 4.5.).

    The most frequent metaphor family is that of COMPETITION, whose core metaphors have been extensively documented in the literature (Hodgkin, 1985; Stein et al., 1990; Hamburger & Itzhayek, 1998; Weaver, 2013; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017, etc.), and is also highlighted by the present analysis. Closely related to competition is the conceptual elaboration of DESTRUCTION and CHAOS (Crum, 1987).

In conflict analyses, the core metaphors of WAR, BATTLE and GAME have figured prominently, which is largely due to the general features of interpersonal conflicts. This is closely related to the semantic structure of *conflict* ('clashing') and the typically negative attitudes it evokes, moreover it largely follows from the general features of interpersonal conflicts. These can be described as involving at least two participants who stand in a certain relationship, in the context of which some kind of incompatibility arises with regard to an entity. In linguistic elaborations, several elements of BATTLE may be foregrounded (physical aggressions, teams, opposition, etc.).

4.4.1   CONFLICT IS WAR, FIGHT

(7) a. *Igen, hogy őt lehet **támadni**.*
         'Yes, she can be **attacked**.'   (Int. 4, MD)
     b. *hogy picit úgy **felvette** a **harcot** a nővérekkel **szemben**.*
         'She kind of **picked up** the **fight against** the nurses'   (Int. 5, MD)
     c. *megpróbálnék **magam köré állítani egy csapatot**, aki velem együtt **kiharcolja** az igazságot tanúként*
         'I tried to **build a team of witnesses around me** that would **fight** for the truth'   (Int. 25, N)
     d. *ellenségekkel vagyok körülvéve.*
         'I'm **surrounded** by **enemies**'   (Int. 25, N)

4.4.2   CONFLICT IS QUARRELLING

In the emergence of conflicts as well as in conflict stories and conflict management, a key role is played by communication (Krauss & Morsella, 2014; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017; Kim et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2017; Bochatay et al.; 2017, Csupor et al., 2017), which is also manifested at the level of metaphors, usually as QUARRELLING/DISPUTE within the concept of COMPETITION. Again, this is related to the concept of clashing that forms part of the original semantic structure of the word *conflict*; moreover, it hinges on incompatibility and the ARGUMENT IS WAR structural metaphor as well (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Among linguistic elaborations and individual interpretations, conventionalized expressions commonly appear (e.g. *szóváltás* 'dispute', *veszekedés, összeszólalkozás* 'quarrelling'). Much less frequent is the expression *tyúkperpatvar* 'hens' fight', which more strongly highlights the informant's individual, value-depriving interpretation and whose individual character is shown by the fact that it does not occur in the Hungarian National Corpus at all. In the cases of *tyúkperpatvar* and *tyúkudvari konfliktus* 'hen yard conflict/bickering' (19b), a stereotype about women may also be activated, as the conflicts in question involve

(and are experienced by) female participants. Furthermore, *tyúkperpatvar* may also function as a blend, with *tyúkper* 'hen-stealing' and *perpatvar* 'clash' both expressing disdain for the object of dispute, value deprivation and a negative impact on human relationships.

(8) a. *És nincs **veszekedés** köztük és **működik**.*
'And there is no **dispute between** <u>them</u> and **it works**.' (Int. 6, MD)

b. *szót szó követett és hát tulajdonképpen elég csúnyán **összeszólalkoztunk**.*
'well, **one word followed the other** and in the end we had quite a nasty **quarrel**.' (Int. 30, N)

c. *Tyúkperpatvar jellegű, amikor két kolleganő **összevitatkozik**.*
'It is a **bickering conflict** when two female colleagues are having an **argument**.' (Int. 29, HN)

4.4.3 CONFLICT IS A GAME

The metaphor CONFLICT IS A GAME is strongly related to the conception of competition, and may be regarded as frequent among conflict metaphors (Stein et al., 1990; McCorkle & Mills, 1992; Weaver, 2013; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017).

(9) a. *én azért látom, hogy nagy **játékos**.*
'what I see though is that he is a great **player**' (Int. 6, MD)

b. *Nyilván magát próbálta **védeni**, de ez ugye rövidtávon kiderült, hogy nem én vagyok a **hunyó**, hanem ő.*
'Of course he tried to **defend** himself but soon it became clear that I am not the **culprit** [**the seeker in a hide-and-seek game**]; he is.'
(Int. 18, Nurse)

Within the metaphor family of competition, core metaphors are typically linked to negative concepts. In relation to metaphors of FIGHTING and WAR, the consequences are often foregrounded, for example DESTRUCTION, DEVASTATION, FALLING ILL, PAIN and also CONFUSION as well as CHAOS, as shown by the examples below.

4.4.4 CONFLICT IS POISON

(10) *egy **belső feszültség** az embernek és nem az, hogy **kifele** is és **megmérgezi** az egész mindennapos munkát*
'it's an **internal tension** and it's spreading **out** and **poisons** everyday work completely' (Int. 19, Nurse)

4.4.5   CONFLICT IS A DISEASE/PAIN

(11)   a.   *helyzetet kezelni*   (Int. 3, MD)
              '**to treat the situation**'
       b.   *próbáljuk ezt orvosolni*
              'we are trying to **cure this**'   (Int. 10, MD)
       c.   *Ez nekem nagyon fáj a mai napig.*
              '**This hurts** me so much even today.'   (Int. 1, MD)

4.4.6   CONFLICT IS FIRE

(12)   *szép lassan az egész kialudt vagy kiégett.*
        'slowly the whole thing **went out** or **burned away**'   (Int. 10, MD)

4.4.7   CONFLICT IS A MESS (CREASE/BALL OF THREAD)

(13)   a.   *ebből a gomolyagból mindig tud valamit megoldani*
              '**from this ball of thread** he always finds a *solution*'   (Int. 3, MD)
       b.   *megpróbálta úgy elsimítani a vezető főorvos a konfliktust*
              'the chief physician tried to kind of **iron out** the **conflict**'   (Int. 10, MD)
       c.   [*A főnővér*] *beül és megpróbálja elsikálni a dolgot meg ilyenek. És az jó.*
              Mert az ember olyan biztonságban érzi magát.
              '[The head nurse] comes in and she tries to **scrub** the **thing away** and stuff
              like this. And that is good. Because you kind of feel **secure**.'   (Int. 24, N)

Positive metaphors appear much less frequently in relation to conflict, and when
they do, they are mostly linked to the metaphor family of COOPERATION. Such
conceptualizations have been found in conflict stories of persons in leading posi-
tions or a higher status in the hierarchy. Therefore I discuss them in detail in the
Section 4.5, which addresses the relationship between conflicts and power ((13c),
(17a), (b), (18a)–(c)).

4.5   Conflict, power, metaphors

While collecting data, it became evident that power relations and the hierarchical
structure of health care were closely related to conflicts (see Figure 1). Although,
the analysis of power relations was not part of the original research plan, the issue
was so central at the three research sites that we addressed it as a specific area of
inquiry (Bochatay et al., 2021). One future goal of our research is to offer a de-
tailed metaphor analysis of conflict stories related to power, also exploring their
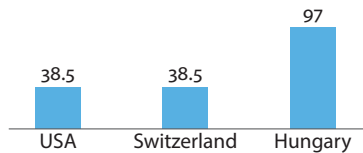culture-specific aspects.

Figure 1. Percentage of conflict stories involving power

A basic feature of healthcare work is the existence of power differentials between participants and groups involved in healing (Hall, 2005; Kreindler et al., 2012). Power refers to "having influence or control over the beliefs, behaviors and values of individuals, groups or institutions" (Kuper et al., 2017: 165). The question might arise as to why it is important to address the issue of power in the context of conflict analysis. Research has shown that conflict and power play an important role in team dynamics in health care, they represent the main two reasons why teams fail to work effectively (Janss et al., 2012). Conflict and power are mostly interpreted negatively, although both can/could be the source of effective interprofessional teamwork conducive to the task of inspiring and leading a team (Gabel, 2012; Bochatay et al., 2021).

In the Hungarian data, conflicts and power are intertwined in almost every incident involving healthcare professionals (97%). This connection is typically construed in a negative fashion, it is rare for the higher power status of a doctor or head nurse to receive a positive evaluation ((13c), (17a), (b), (18a)–(c)). In the Hungarian data, power is often construed as an UP/DOWN, BELOW/ABOVE or a SMALL/BIG, YOUNGER/OLDER relationship, which reflects strongly hierarchical interpersonal or interprofessional relations. This is also illustrated by ((14a), (b), (c)). In the 5th interview ((14a), (b)), a female doctor considers it the main source of conflict that one of her female colleagues, who holds a Ph.D., works less (e.g. as physician in attendance) at weekends. More generally, she considers herself superior to others; however, as she arrived at the ward later, others put her in a lower rank. In the 14th interview (14c), the doctor highlights futile battles between professions, tacitly based on super- and subordination, as a source of conflict which hinders efficient work.

(14)   a.   *Picit idősebb is, mint mi és azért érezteti is, hogy ő- hogy ő valami-valamilyen szinten picit olyan* **magasabb szinten áll***, mint mi. Pedig szakmailag egyáltalán nem jobb.*
'He is a little older than we are, and because of that he thinks he **stands** at a slightly **higher level** than us. But professionally, he is not any better than us.'
(Int. 5, MD)

b. *Hát, ő a **legkisebb** igen, és akkor a most már ugye egyrészt nemcsak nekünk tűnt fel, hanem akik **alattam** vannak. Ketten is vannak, két **kisebb**.*
    'Well, yes. He is the **smallest** ('most junior'). And we were not the only ones who saw that. Even the **underdogs**. Well there are two of them, two **smaller** ('more junior') ones.'   (Int. 5, MD)

c. *néha **nehéz** ezt a **társszakmák közötti hierarchikus**, de értelmetlen ilyen **harcot kezelni**, főleg, tehát vannak olyan szakmák, ahol ez még jobban kijön, akik az úgymond az orvosi **hierarchia alján** vannak.*
    'it's sometimes **hard** to **deal with** [lit. also **cure**] this **hierarchical** [relationship] **between** professions but it's also pointless **to fight**, actually there are jobs where it's even worse, which are kind of **at the bottom of the hierarchy**.'   (Int. 14, MD)

The conceptualization of power relations may involve core metaphors of the COMPETITION metaphor family, namely FIGHT and VIOLENCE (14c), as also illustrated by (15) through the POWER IS UP, POWER IS VIOLENCE metaphors.

(15)   ***Fölülről tapossák** az embert*
       'They are **treading** on you **from above**'   (Int. 19, Nurse)

One key source of conflicts in Hungarian health care are disagreements resulting from tacitly assumed feudal rules, based on unwritten or customary law or strongly hierarchical power relations (Csupor et al., 2017). In Hungarian conflict stories, power and hierarchy are often interpreted as a system of latent feudal rules, which can appear explicitly (16a) or implicitly ((14a), (b)) in the interactions. This "(feudal) hiererchical system," the latent feudal rules probably constitute a cultural pattern and the key element of conflicts experienced by Hungarian healthcare professionals. In the 3rd interview ((16a), (b)), one of main grievance of the doctor is that physicians standing closer to the professor have more opportunities and special benefits (with regard to taking holidays and attending doctor training). Accordingly, he describes the structure of his ward as a feudal society or caste system.

(16)   a. *A **feudális rendszer** ezt **megoldja** ezt a **kérdést**. És mindig a **feudális rendszerben** ugye mindig az a gond, hogyha két **földesúr** van két **jobbággyal**, hogy akkor melyik **jobbágy** az **erősebb**. És, hogy melyik az **erősebb** azt általában az dönti el, hogy melyik **földesúr** az **erősebb** és ez így van. […] Nyilván ez, mondom ez **feudalizmus**.*
           'The **feudalistic system solves** this **question**, and always the main problem in the **feudalistic organization** is when there are **two feudal lords with two serfs**, then which **serf** is **stronger**. And which one is **stronger** is usually decided by whose **lord** is stronger and that's how **this** is. […] Obviously **this** is, like I'm saying, **feudalism**.'   (Int. 3, MD)

    b.   *És kicsit ilyen **kasztrendszer** van, **alá- fölé rendeltségek** és a nővérek rendsze-resen érzékenyen reagálnak arra, hogy az orvosok nem tekintik feltétlen **part-nerként** őket.*

        'And there is a kind of **caste system** with **sub- and superordinations** and nurses often react sensitively to the fact that doctors do not consider them as **partners**.'   (Int. 3, MD)

Metaphors related to power and conflicts evoke the concepts POWER IS UP, POWER IS BEING HIGH(ER), POWER IS BEING BIG, POWER IS BEING STRONG(ER), HOSPITAL WARDS ARE EMPIRES WITH FEUDAL ORDER. In this context both power and conflicts are interpreted as rather negative phenomena. However, power and conflicts can support team cohesion and can be the source of effective teamwork (French & Raven, 1959; Kim et. al, 2017). The question is: How are the positive concepts of conflict and power to be characterized?

    In the Hungarian data supporting, protective power has a much lower rate than the negatively interpreted power style. This is also shown by the results of our survey of conflict stories. In the case of nurses, the protective role of the head nurse was mentioned more often in an explicit way (in 9 cases out of 25) [cf. ((13c), (17b)]. And in (17a), we see a head nurse's report about how she prepares the schedule for her nurses in a maximally cooperative manner, with the latter construed as each other's SIBLINGS.

(17)   a.   *A két **testvérnek**, hogy osztod el a legigazságosabban a zsák mákot, hogy az egyik elosztja, a másik választ. Itt **ugyanezt**, én ugyanezt próbáltam vallani.*

        'Between two **siblings**, how do you divide a sack of poppy seeds in the fairest way, well one of them divides it, the other one chooses. Here I tried to do the **same**.'   (Int. 29, HN)

    b.   *Az én főnököm a főnővér. Hál' Istennek pont olyan ember, aki nagyon **nyitott** ezekre a **problémákra**.*

        'My boss is the head nurse. Thank God she is the kind of person who is very **sensitive to** [lit. open to] **these problems**.'   (Int. 22, N.)

By contrast, in the case of doctors, the power of the chief physician or a doctor of higher status was explicitly evaluated in conflict stories as destructive, offensive or negative in 35 instances, with a protective role only receiving two explicit mentions. The latter is exemplified here by a resident doctor's report about the chief physician's attitude (18a). In ((18b), (c), (d)), we present the general opinion of a chief physician about cooperation and conflict management.

(18) a. *És a főorvosnő ennek megfelelően mindig <u>mögöttem áll</u> [...]. Mindenki **mögé**
          odaáll egyébként, de így a fiatalok **mögé** különösen. Tehát hogy **teljes vállszé-**
          lességgel ebbe belevonódott.*
          'And the chief physician [female] always **stands behind me** [stand by me']
          [...]. She **stands behind** ['supports'] everyone by the way, but especially the
          young ones. So that she was **involved in this** totally [**shoulder to shoulder**
          with us].   (Int. 12, MD)
      b. *Ezt én a **legelején** elmondtam, hogy **evezzen velem ezen a hajón**, aki ezzel
          egyetért. Na, most **ebben** azért szerintem sok **partner** van, meg sok **hívem**
          van, aki ezeket látja és akarja.*
          'I said this at the **beginning**, that those who agree should <u>stay with me on</u>
          <u>the same boat</u>. So I think I have a lot of **partners** and **followers** in this,
          who see and want these things.'   (Int. 15, MD)
      c. *Tehát ezeket a **kibeszélő-showkat** azért tartjuk, hogy ezeket **minimalizáljuk**.*
          'So we do these **talk-shows** in order to **minimize** these things.'
                                                                              (Interview 15, MD)
      d. *azt gondolom, hogy itt **házon belül** nagyjából **egy szekeret húzunk***
          'I think here **within the house** we are more or less **pulling the same cart**'
                                                                              (Int. 15, MD)

The lack of protective power also highlights several conceptions which are highly
relevant for the understanding and management of conflicts. In (19a), a resident
reports experiencing general, everyday conflicts because of the fact that she is left
alone, nobody is instructing her. In (19b) a female doctor, who recently arrived at
the department, had a serious conflict with one male colleague. He was verbally
and physically aggressive with her. The head of the department did not take this
conflict seriously conceptualizing it as BICKERING. He found his position and the
reputation of the department more important than solving this problem.

(19) a. *Két éve kezdtem a rezidens képzést, de majdnem szinte a kezdetektől **egyedül**
          vagyok hagyva, hogy rendeljek egyedül. Aminek tök jó **oktató** jellege is van
          csak, hogy mondjuk, emellé hiányzik az, hogy valaki **tanítson** is nekem
          dolgokat.*
          'I started resident training two years ago but **I have been left alone** almost
          from the start, I should do consulting hours by myself. Which has a nice
          instructive aspect to it but it's, like, missing that somebody should also
          teach me things.'   (Int. 7, MD)
      b. *Nem készült írásbeli jegyzőkönyv, tekintettel arra, hogy az osztályvezető, aki
          egyben a kórház igazgatója is volt, egyszerűen **nem állt mellém**. [...] Nem
          engedheti meg magának, hogy egy osztály, aminek jó hírneve van jegyzőkönyv
          készüljön. Gyakorlatilag ezt **lezárta** olyan **címen**, hogy ez egy **tyúkudvari**
          konfliktus.*

> 'The conflict was unregistered, because the head of the department, who was also the director of the hospital, he simply didn't **stand by me**. […] He cannot let register this conflict in a department which has good reputation. And he **ended it** by saying it is just **bickering**.' (Int. 10, MD)

The construal of conflicts and protective power is conceptually related to spatial relations, movement, communication, and the elaboration of social relations, as already shown by the examples above. The conceptual elaboration of a supportive, positive power role involves the metaphor family of COOPERATION rather than COMPETITION. The participants are regarded as siblings/partners/students-teachers, not as rivals; team work is about rowing together in a boat, moving together, not about fighting and dissent; the participants have an opportunity to voice their opinions rather than having to "swallow" it.

The two metaphor families can also be traced in the empirical material of our research. With regard to question of how space, communication and social relations are construed in conflict stories, it can be said that there are big conceptual differences between positively and negatively interpreted relations (see Table 1).

Table 1. The conceptual characteristics of supportive/constructive and destructive power in conflict

Positive	Negative
SPACE (horizontal)	SPACE (vertical)
near, behind, beside, in front of (near)	above/below
	(far)
COOPERATION:	COMPETITION:
being in the same boat	war, game, fight
being partners	opposites: being strong/weak; being loud/
being sisters/brothers	silent; being big/small
being students/teachers	
moving in one way	
COMMUNICATION:	COMMUNICATION:
speaking out	staying silent, "swallowing"
safety	insecurity

Positive conceptualization is primarily characterized by horizontal relations. Mapped onto space, this is manifested in the NEXT TO, BEHIND, IN FRONT OF relations. By contrast, space is typically elaborated by vertical relations in negatively interpreted conflicts, with a key role played by oppositions: ABOVE–BELOW, SMALL–BIG, STRONG–WEAK, LOUD–SILENT, SMOOTH–WRINKLED. On the positive side, movement is more likely to be about approaching and convergent moves, whereas with negative interpretations, distance and clashing are profiled, which

activate two different schemas of social behavior. One is that of COOPERATION, the other is that of COMPETITION. The conceptual specificity of the latter is higher in our empirical material (WAR, GAME, FIGHT, DESTRUCTIVE FORCE, etc.). This is consonant with earlier studies and also with the generally negative evaluation of conflicts and power. Differences also show up in the area of communication, which makes for a key factor in conflict management. Positively evaluated power creates a supporting atmosphere which allows for the open discussion of problems, whereas with negatively interpreted conflicts, the strategy of staying silent and "swallowing" the problem receives linguistic elaboration.

Essentially, the analysis of conflict metaphors shows that there are two different ways of being in the same boat (see Figure 2).
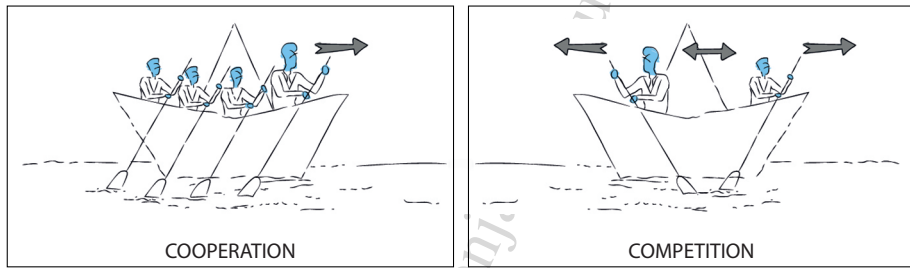

Figure 2. Being in the same boat, in two different ways

5.   Conclusion

As the analysis of conflicts reported by healthcare professionals has shown, conflicts have a range of conventionalized conceptual and linguistic construals, which correlate strongly with the bodily, emotional and socio-cultural experiences of their participants. These experiences may have a spatial or temporal dimension, based primarily on the concepts of INSIDE/OUTSIDE, MOVEMENT, and the PROCESS- or EVENT-like conceptualization of conflicts. In addition, conflicts may be conceptualized as heavy OBJECTS or FOOD appearing inside or outside of the body. Two large schematic groups, metaphor families of conflicts can also be documented. These are closely related to the positive vs. negative evaluation/interpretation of conflicts, and bound up with the two main general conceptual schemas of social relations, COOPERATION and COMPETITION (cf. Table 2).

Both the present analysis and other studies reported in the literature suggest that the schema of COMPETITION predominates in linguistic elaborations of conflicts and relationships of power. This includes such concepts as BATTLE, FIGHTING, QUARRELING, GAME, DESTRUCTION, etc. The conceptualization of positive

Table 2. Conflict metaphors in health care conflicts

GENERAL CONCEPTS OF CONFLICTS	
CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER	
CONFLICT IS MOTION	
CONFLICT IS AN OBJECT	
CONFLICT IS AN EVENT/PROCESS	
COOPERATIVE CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT AND POWER	**COMPETITIVE CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT AND POWER**
COOPERATION IS BEING IN THE SAME BOAT	CONFLICT IS WAR, BATTLE
COOPERATION IS BEING PARTNERS	CONFLICT IS QUARREL
COOPERATION IS BEING SISTERS/BROTHERS	CONFLICT IS A GAME
COOPERATION IS BEING STUDENTS/TEACHERS	CONFLICT IS POISON
	CONFLICT IS A DISEASE/PAIN
	CONFLICT IS FIRE
	CONFLICT IS A MESS
COOPERATION IS BEING BEHIND/BESIDE/IN FRONT OF	POWER IS UP
COOPERATION IS BEING NEAR	POWER IS BEING FAR

supporting power, and the creative, positive evaluation of conflicts are much rarer, which also means that related linguistic and conceptual metaphors are less frequently attested. Still, it is possible to give a broad outline of the conceptual differences between positive and negative conflicts. In the former, horizontal relations (IN FRONT OF, BEHIND, NEXT TO) play a more prominent role in construals of space and movement, with approaching, convergent or shared movement receiving and elaboration. With regard to communication, open discussion, and in terms of social relations, the concepts of family, friendship, partnership and teacher-student relations are evoked. By contrast, negatively evaluated conflicts are characterized by vertical relations (ABOVE/BELOW, HIERARCHY). Here, the conceptual elaboration of distance, conflicting interests, polar opposites, incompatibility and fighting predominate.

In research on conflicts, metaphor analysis is playing an increasingly important role, as metaphors give us an opportunity to look into the sources, emotional and socio-cultural aspects of interpersonal conflicts, including variations in conceptual processing. Working with metaphors, "mind sets" and re-framing also paves the way toward change in the assessment of conflicts and relationships of power (Crum, 1987; Ellison, 2002; Hamburger & Itzhayek, 1998; LeBaron, 2014; Coleman & Deutsch, 2014; Hocker & Wilmot, 2017; etc.). Hamburger and Itzhayek (1988) make the following remark about organizational conflicts in particular, but it holds true for other types of conflict as well that:

> Intervention using the metaphor causes not only logical insight and rational change but an emotional change through the right brain hemisphere. The metaphor gives us insight into the way organization members perceive, organize, and interpret the event and process in the organization. This character of the metaphor […] makes it a powerful instrument in solving organizational conflict and effecting other organizational interventions.   (Hamburger & Itzhayek, 1998, p. 395)

As the analysis has shown, conflict metaphors involve a variety of dimensions and concepts, and they can serve as a toolbox for understanding, changing and managing conflicts. The present research project is designed to be followed up by a comparative metaphor analysis of the conflict metaphors found in all power-related conflict stories shared by American (56), Swiss (50), and Hungarian (88) participants. The analysis will address both linguistic and conceptual aspects of the metaphors, also exploring correlations with the social bases of power (French & Raven, 1959; Bochatay et al., 2021). Metaphor analysis and its results will be integrated into the conflict management training of healthcare professionals. Finally, the comparative analysis will also bring us closer to an understanding of cultural models underlying conflicts in health care.

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