

## A Corpus-Based Contrastive Analysis of Metaphorical Collocations of the Terms *Right* and *Pravo*: Do Different Legal Cultures Give Rise to Different Metaphors?

### ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the contrastive analysis of metaphorical collocations of the nouns *right* and *pravo* in the web corpora of English and Croatian. It categorizes metaphorical collocations based on the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991), and attempts to detect the similarities and differences in the cognitive structuring of the two terms. The paper is thus an attempt to investigate the metaphorical dimension of legal collocations, a perspective largely ignored to date in the study of collocations in legal discourse. By combining the corpus-based approach, which allows us to access a significant number of collocations, and using the Master Metaphor List, the paper reveals the network of conceptual mappings operating in the background of collocations and proposes that such cognitive structuring cuts across different legal cultures.

**Keywords:** Croatian, English, legal phraseology, metaphorical collocations, metaphorical images, web corpora

### Korpusna kontrastivna analiza metaforičnih kolokacij izrazov *right* in *pravo*: ali različne pravne kulture ustvarjajo različne metafore?

#### IZVLEČEK

Prispevek se osredotoča na kontrastivno analizo metaforičnih kolokacij samostalnikov *right* in *pravo* v spletnih korpusih angleščine in hrvaščine. Metaforične kolokacije kategorizira na podlagi seznama Master Metaphor List (Lakoff et al. 1991) ter poskuša odkriti podobnosti in razlike v kognitivni strukturiranosti obeh izrazov. Članek je tako poskus raziskovanja metaforične razsežnosti pravnih kolokacij, ki je bila doslej pri preučevanju kolokacij v pravnem diskurzu večinoma prezrta. S kombinacijo korpusnega pristopa, ki nam omogoča dostop do precejšnjega števila kolokacij, in z uporabo glavnega seznama metafor članek razkriva mrežo konceptualnih preslikav, ki delujejo v ozadju kolokacij, in predlaga, da takšna kognitivna strukturiranost preči različne pravne kulture.

**Ključne besede:** hrvaščina, angleščina, pravna frazeologija, metaforične kolokacije, metaforične podobe, spletni korpusi

# 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

While it is well-known that there have been only very few attempts in legal phraseology to propose a typology of phraseological units (Kjær 1990; 2007; Biel 2014; *Goźdz-Roszkowski* 2011; Kopaczyk 2013), most scholars suggest that the language of law does not abound in idiomatic expressions. Instead, its phraseology mainly includes multi-word terms, specialized collocations and formulaic expressions (Kjær 1990), but also lexical bundles (Goźdz-Roszkowski 2011; Kopaczyk 2013), i.e., recurrent word combinations fulfilling specific functions in legal discourse that are best revealed through a corpus-driven approach (Goźdz-Roszkowski and Pontrandolfo 2015, 133). The most recent typology of phraseological units in legal discourse is based on Kjær's (1990, 2007) and Goźdz-Roszkowski's (2011) research, and includes text-organizing patterns (e.g., amending and closing formulas); grammatical patterns (e.g., expressing obligation with the modal verb *shall*); term-forming patterns (i.e., multi-word terms); term-embedding collocations (e.g., *to hold shares*); and lexical collocations (e.g., *subject to this Regulation*) (Biel 2014).

This paper focuses on term-embedding collocations of the nouns *right* in English and *pravo* in Croatian, and suggests that, although such combinations are not idiomatic in nature, they do owe their existence to conceptual metaphors. This also seems natural given the central role that a metaphor plays in legal reasoning (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 268; Winter 2001). Since the metaphorical dimension of collocations has been either ignored or not well-defined thus far (Patekar 2022; Stojić and Košuta 2022), both in phraseology of general-purpose (LGP) and special-purpose language (LSP), the project *Metaphorical Collocations – Syntagmatic Word Combinations between Semantics and Pragmatics* was launched at the University of Rijeka to investigate this subtype of collocations in the web corpora of the English, German, Croatian and Italian languages. Some authors refer to such combinations as metaphorical collocations (Reder 2006; Volungevičienė 2008; Konecny 2010, 2012), and suggest that they are characterized by a certain degree of stability rooted in the semantic cohesion between the constituents of such combinations, which in turn results from the process of metaphorization or metonymization (Stojić 2024, 11). Although it seems that metaphors and metonymies contribute to the stability of collocations, the fact remains that the higher the degree of stability between the constituents, the more faded the metaphor (*ibid.*). Consequently, we sometimes need to resort to the diachronic approach to the analysis of such combinations in order to detect the metaphorical concept operating in their background. Furthermore, such an approach will have to include the analysis of subject-specific knowledge in order to be able to explain the specific meaning that a collocate produces when coupled with a legal term.

In legal discourse, the presence of metaphors was recognized as early as in 1816, when Jacob Grimm published his paper *Von der Poesie im Recht* (Grimm 1816), indicating that the multinomials prevailing in both law and poetry have the same origin. His claim, however, was challenged by Kopaczyk (2017), whose research suggests that the usage of multinomials has significantly increased over time. With the exception of multinomials, the metaphorical

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dimension of legal phrasemes has been largely ignored hitherto in the research on legal phraseology. As a matter of fact, although metaphors have received significant attention in other specialized discourse, such as economics (Herrera-Soler and White 2012) and politics (Goatly 2007), “the interface of cognitive metaphor studies and legal studies is still a relatively novel and largely uncharted territory” (Wojtczak and Witzczak-Plisiecka 2019, 275). Other than Winter’s research on the role of metaphor in legal reasoning (2001), two studies that made an overview of metaphors in different types of legal texts (Imamović 2013; Richard 2014), two pieces of research on the use of metaphorical expressions in Polish legislation (Wojtczak and Witzczak-Plisiecka 2019) and legal English textbooks (Kordić 2023), there are no systematic studies on metaphorical collocations in legal language, let alone ones that adopt a corpus-based perspective. The paper thus attempts to fill this gap by suggesting that the terms *right* and *pravo* and the contexts in which they are embedded tend to be largely metaphorical.

In order to prove this claim the paper draws on the insights of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and tries to group metaphorical collocations according to the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991),<sup>2</sup> an extensive inventory of conceptual metaphors that includes four main general metaphorical systems: event structure, mental events, emotions and others. The inventory represents the first, hierarchically ordered list of metaphors, with the four general metaphorical systems including further specifications and sub-specifications. According to Lakoff and Johnson, a conceptual metaphor enables us to understand one thing in terms of another (1980, 5). It is a cognitive ability that manifests itself on a linguistic level (Ostroški Anić 2019, 41), and metaphorical collocations as phraseological units thus seem to owe their existence to the fact that the whole human conceptual system is largely metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 6). Furthermore, metaphorical collocations represent metaphorical concepts that are arranged systematically, and, as suggested by Lakoff and Johnson, by studying such expressions we can get an insight into the “coherent system” (1980, 9) of metaphorical concepts and the metaphorical expressions that they are represented by in the language itself. Such systematicity, as will be shown in this paper, will result in multiple metaphorical images for one specific collocation, confirming the claim that concepts can be analysed from different perspectives relative to our experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 76). A careful study will, however, reveal that one concept is more basic than the other, or is superordinate to the other, making the introduction of other concepts superfluous. This in turn allows us to arrive at a network of metaphorical images and group more specific images into one superordinate, which might provide aid in assigning concepts to metaphorical collocations of other nouns sharing the same or a similar semantic field.

## 2 Metaphorical Collocations

Since it is the task of every phraseologist to specify the object of their research, “in order to (i) render their definitions maximally precise and (ii) allow researchers from other frameworks

<sup>2</sup> Although fully aware of the fact that the list produced by Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz (1991) is far from complete, and that in the last three decades new repositories have been designed (e.g., the MetaNet project at ISCI, Berkeley), the project team opted for the Master Metaphor List due to the fact that the MetaNet repository was at that time migrating and was not available from the main webpage (<https://metanet.arts.ubc.ca/metaphor-databases>).

to more easily recognize potential areas of overlap, or indeed conflict” (Gries 2008, 3), we will at this point take up this challenge and embark upon defining metaphorical collocations. Approaching this task, however, entails laborious study, for there is to date no consensus on a widely accepted definition of collocations (Patekar 2022), let alone metaphorical ones. As a matter of fact, Gries’ proposal of six criteria of phraseologisms (2008) suggests that the nature and number of the elements in a phraseologism, the number of times an expression must occur to be regarded as a phraseologism, the permissible distance between the elements of a phraseologism, the degree of lexical and syntactic flexibility of elements, the role of the semantic unity, and semantic non-compositionality are largely dependent on researcher’s input. Furthermore, the advance of corpus linguistics has widened the concept of the collocation, which now also includes more extended units of meaning (Sinclair 2004), or “extended collocations”, i.e., “two-word combinations augmented by at least one lexical item” (Gabrovšek 2014, 11). Some studies even suggest that the base of the collocation can in some contexts, especially in specialized discourse, be extended to include more than one element (Dobrić Basaneže 2017; 2018). It thus goes without saying that anyone who tries to precisely define collocations is at risk of receiving criticism for either being too narrow or too wide in their view. That said, and fully aware of the potential criticism, we will approach our definition of collocations both from the frequency-based and phraseological approaches (Nesselhauf 2004), and construe the notion of collocations to include only binary collocations, with their minimum relative frequency set at five per million words. The metaphorical dimension, on the other hand, is another complicating factor, mostly due to the fact that there is again no consensus among researchers on what is or should be metaphorical in a collocation. Some previous research has shown that the metaphorical dimension is usually reflected by the collocate (Stojić and Murica 2010; Stojić and Štiglić 2011; Stojić and Barić 2013; Stojić 2015). Very often the metaphorical potential of the collocate is too weak to contribute to the figurativeness of the collocation as a whole, and remains only vaguely distinguishable in the collocate component, thus resulting in a “faded metaphor” (Patekar 2022). Our understanding of metaphorical collocations is closest to that of Philip (2011), who compares metaphorical collocations to idioms, but suggests that the main distinction between the two lies in the fact that in metaphorical collocations the meaning of their individual components remains transparent. Moreover, the results of our project have shown that in polysemous nouns the process of metaphorization occurs both at the level of the base and that of the collocate (Stojić and Matešić 2024). This also holds true for the nouns analysed in this paper, since both *right* and *pravo* by their etymology refer to something straight<sup>3</sup> or stretched out.<sup>4</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that in specialized discourses the concept of metaphorical collocations includes both terminological and non-terminological collocations, but this paper focuses only on terminological ones and disregards the concordances in which the collocates display their non-specialized meaning (e.g., *to be right*).

### 3 Corpus and Methodology

As addressed elsewhere in this paper, the corpora used for extracting metaphorical collocations are enTenTen20 for English and hrwac 2.2. for Croatian, the only available and

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<sup>3</sup> See [https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search\\_by\\_id&cid=eVhnXhc%3D](https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&cid=eVhnXhc%3D). Accessed June 10, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=right>. Accessed June 10, 2023.

representative web corpus for the Croatian language. Since the paper deals with collocations of the terms *right* and *pravo*, we extracted collocational profiles of the selected nouns by means of the wordsketch function. The following grammatical relations remain relevant for our study: “modifiers of x”, “adjective predicates of x”, “verbs with x as object”, “verbs with x as subject”, and “possessors of x”. The equivalent relations in Croatian include “kakav?”, “biti kakav?”, “particip”, “subjekt\_od”, “objekt\_od” and “n-koga čega”. It is obvious that for Croatian there is an additional grammatical relation, given the fact that in the English corpus the participle structure is realized throughout four categories.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, enTenTen20 suggests that the relation “possessors of x” is also rather repetitive or irrelevant for English nouns, given that the “modifier of x” structure also includes noun+noun combination. For this reason, there are only four salient grammatical relations worth studying in the English corpus. A further step in the methodology included careful study of the possible collocation candidates in Excel, whereupon we indicated whether a combination displayed through wordsketches is a collocation, and if, yes, whether it is metaphorical or not. Metaphorical collocations were identified by means of the MIP method (Pragglejaz Group 2007), which allows researchers to distinguish between the basic and contextual meaning of lexical units. The method proposes that collocations should be analysed constituent by constituent, which is why we first analysed the meaning of the base and then turned to the analysis of the collocates. Since both *right* and *pravo* are terms, their meaning was analysed by turning to legal dictionaries. As for the collocates, we used the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*<sup>6</sup> and *Online Etymological Dictionary*<sup>7</sup> for the English collocations and *Hrvatski jezični portal* (HJP)<sup>8</sup> for the Croatian candidates. The final step involved a classification of metaphorical collocations according to the networks of conceptual metaphors proposed in the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991), and a comparison of the results from both corpora to reveal the similarities and differences between the mappings in two different legal cultures. The metaphors outlined in this paper are mostly taken directly from this inventory, although some are further elaborated based on the analogy with some other abstract nouns. In Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz (1991) rights are coupled with possessions, although not monetary ones, but money is, on the other hand, portrayed as a liquid, which justifies our reasoning for the image RIGHT IS A LIQUID MONETARY POSSESSION. Similarly, in the OTHER group, we assumed that, if obligations are viewed as children in Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz (1991) and are subsumed under OTHER, then we must also perceive rights in the same way, as evidenced by the comparison between the following examples:

*He's been neglecting his duties.* (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991, 205).

*Sva njegova politička prava su zanemarena.* (hrwac, zadarskilist.hr)

<sup>5</sup> Sketch Engine very often lists –ing and –ed participles under the relation “modifiers of x” (e.g., *bargaining rights*) or “adjective predicates of x” (e.g., *rights are respected*), or even falsely recognizes a particular relation (e.g., in the combination *eating rights* the noun *right* is obviously not the object of *eat*, instead, *eating* serves as a modifier of *rights*).

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>. Accessed 10 April 2024.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.etymonline.com/>. Accessed 10 April 2024.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://hjp.znanje.hr/>. Accessed 10 April 2024.

## 4 Results

The results shown in this section suggest that law is largely metaphorical, despite the fact that certainty of expression is often cited as the objective of legal language. Recent research has shown that in law there seem to be four major metaphor groups coupling legal concepts with natural elements, war, and different objects or persons (Richard 2014, 4). Some of these categorizations can be challenged, since the fact that a collocate invokes a certain image – for instance, that of an object – does not imply the existence of the same image in the collocation as the lexical unit. A case in point is the collocation *to break the law*, which might lead us to believe that law is perceived as an object that can be broken. As argued by Winter (2001, 14), we do not destroy the law here, we simply transgress its limits. If this were not so, the language would abound in expressions indicating the repair of the law. Their non-existence, however, gives rise to the conceptual metaphor *LAW IS A CONSTRAINT*, and is further supported by collocations like *law-abiding* or *get around the law* (Winter 2001, 14). Winter's findings thus propose that in order to avoid misconceptions in the classification of image schemas, we have to consider a significant number of semantically related collocates centring around one term, which in turn advocates a corpus-based approach. Furthermore, the grouping of the most frequent metaphorical collocations according to the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991) assists in producing a network of interrelated general and specified images, which without such a combined approach might go unnoticed. Although the analysis, as can be seen from the examples in the next section, is mostly focused on the semantic meaning of collocations, concordances also reveal the morphological behaviour of the nouns *right* and *pravo*, suggesting that alternation is possible between singular and plural forms. Additionally, when the noun *right* occurs in singular form, the collocate is usually preceded by the definite article (e.g., *the basic / fundamental / universal right*).

### 4.1 Metaphorical Collocations of the Noun *Right*

The noun *right* has multiple meanings, but its prototypical legal sense includes “an entitlement to something, whether to concepts like justice and due process or to ownership of property or some interest in property, real or personal”<sup>9</sup>. The process of metaphorization underlying collocations in this section is thus the classical one of coupling abstract concepts with the concrete, and most images belong to the event structure group.

#### **EVENT STRUCTURE**

PROPERTIES ARE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

IMPORTANCE IS A PHYSICAL PROPERTY

IMPORTANCE IS INTERIORITY / CENTRALITY

Modifiers of x: basic / fundamental right

Adjective predicates of x: right is basic / applicable / integral

Verbs with x as object: constitute / uphold / support / undermine rights

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<sup>9</sup> <https://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?typed=right&type=1>. Accessed 5 June 2023.

AMOUNT IS VERTICALITY

Modifiers of x: collective rights

Verbs with x as subject: rights accrue

RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS

Modifiers of x: inalienable / inherent / indispensable / vested right

Verbs with x as object: own / hold / retain / possess / obtain / maintain / enjoy / relinquish the right

RIGHTS ARE MONETARY POSSESSIONS

Verbs with x as object: acquire / grant / earn / gain / reserve / sell / buy / purchase / confer / assign / transfer rights

RIGHT IS A CONTAINER

Modifiers of x: full rights

Adjective predicates of x: right is intact / void / limited / broad

Verbs with x as object: expand / extend rights

GAINING AND MAINTAINING RIGHTS IS FIGHTING A WAR

Adjective predicates of x: right is enforceable

Verbs with x as object: assert / claim / enforce / defend / surrender / safeguard / protect / violate / forfeit / infringe / win / lose / champion / respect / restore the rights

Verbs with x as subject: rights trump

being better in a static situation is being above (more is up / high status is up)

Modifiers of x: divine / absolute / universal right

Adjective predicates of x: right is superior / sacred / sacrosanct

Verbs with x as subject: rights allow / permit

CHANGE IS MOTION / PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION

Verbs with x as object: terminate the right

Verbs with x as subject: rights expire

ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION

Adjective predicates of x: right is exercisable

Verbs with x as object: exercise rights

## OTHER

RIGHT IS A PAINTER

Verbs with x as subject: rights illustrate / depict

SOCIETY IS A BODY

Adjective predicates of x: right is vital / weak

Verbs with x as subject: rights rest

## 4.2 Metaphorical Collocations of the Noun *pravo*

The Croatian noun *pravo* is a homonym and its different meanings are sometimes separated in dictionaries, indicating its different accents. Thus, *pràvo* refers to something which is right, proper, or equitable, whereas the other form *právo* is polysemous and includes two related meanings, those of 'law' and 'right'.<sup>10</sup> Most meanings displayed by the collocates in Sketch Engine, however, are equivalents of the English noun *right*, with the exception of the image MORE / HIGH STATUS IS UP. The largest portion of metaphorical collocations therefore correspond to the images found in enTenTen20.

### EVENT STRUCTURE

PROPERTIES ARE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

IMPORTANCE IS A PHYSICAL PROPERTY

IMPORTANCE IS INTERIORITY / CENTRALITY:

Kakav?: osnovano / elementarno pravo

Biti kakav?: pravo je utemeljeno / zasnovano / temeljeno / ustanovljeno

PROPERTIES ARE POSSESSIONS

RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS

Kakav?: zajamčeno / zagarantirano / oduzeto pravo

Biti kakav?: pravo je pridržano / zadržano

n-koga-što?: oduzeti / uzimati / uskratiti / uživati pravo

n-koga-čega?: nositelj prava

RIGHTS ARE (LIQUID) MONETARY POSSESSIONS

Biti kakav?: pravo je dodijeljeno / prodano

n-koga-što?: polagati / stjecati pravo

n-koga-čega?: izvor prava

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<sup>10</sup> Hrvatsko-engleski rječnik prava, 2019, p. IX, Zagreb: Narodne Novine.



RIGHT IS A CONTAINER

Kakav?: puno pravo

Biti kakav?: pravo je ograničeno / isključeno / prošireno / suženo

n-koga-čega: okvir / opseg prava

n-koga-što?: suziti pravo

GAINING AND MAINTAINING RIGHTS IS FIGHTING A WAR

Kakav?: procesno / zaštićeno pravo

Biti kakav?: pravo je izboreno / prekršeno / utvrđeno / narušeno

n-koga-što?: osporavati / ugrožavati / štititi pravo

n-koga-čega?: obrana / zlouporaba prava

HARM IS DESTRUCTION

Particip: pogaženo / zakinuto pravo

n-koga-čega?: rezanje prava

HARMING IS LOWERING / HELPING IS RAISING / EQUALIZING

Biti kakav?: pravo je umanjeno / uvećano / izjednačeno

n-koga-čega?: jednakost prava

HARM IS PREVENTING FORWARD MOTION TOWARD A GOAL

HARM IS AN OBSTACLE

Kakav?: mjerodavno / obvezno

Biti kakav?: pravo je propisano

BEING BETTER IN A STATIC SITUATION IS BEING ABOVE (MORE IS UP / HIGH STATUS IS UP)

Kakav?: univerzalno / apsolutno pravo

CHANGE IS MOTION / PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION R

Subjekt\_od: pravo prestaje

n-koga-čega: trajanje prava

**OTHER**

RIGHT IS A CHILD

Kakav?: povrijeđeno pravo

Particip: pravo je ostavljeno / iskorišteno / zadovoljeno / zanemareno

RIGHT IS AN EMPLOYEE

Particip: suspendirano pravo

## 5 Discussion

Upon comparing the different categories of metaphorical collocations presented in the previous sections, it seems important to point out that in both English and Croatian legal language rights are perceived as possessions, or abilities to possess. Although this image does occur in the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff, Espenson, and Schwartz 1991), it had not been fully developed yet when the inventory was published, as pointed out by the authors. Data from our corpora thus give significant proof for the existence of the image RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS and its different specifications. In the English corpus rights are perceived as something that cannot be taken away from a person (e.g., *inalienable / inherent / indispensable rights*), and that sometimes have to get covered or dressed in robes in order to achieve that (e.g., *vested right*), whereas in the Croatian corpus there is an invocation of a formal assurance (e.g., *zajamčeno / zagarantirano pravo*) as a guarantee that a right cannot be taken away (e.g., *uzimati / oduzeti pravo*). In both corpora rights also seem to be portrayed as monetary possessions (e.g., *acquire / grant / earn / gain / reserve / sell / buy / purchase / confer rights; pravo je dodijeljeno / prodano; polagati pravo*), but in the Croatian corpus rights are additionally portrayed as liquid monetary possessions (e.g., *stjecati pravo; izvor prava*). Possessing rights is in both corpora perceived as holding or carrying them (e.g., *hold / retain / possess / obtain the right; pravo je pridržano / zadržano / nositelj prava*), but the image POSSESSING IS HOLDING was not introduced as an additional specification, given the fact that the difference between some collocates belonging to this group is rather subtle (e.g., *own* and *possess*) and is no longer visible today (e.g., *possess* – in the late 14th century referred to “holding” without regard to ownership;<sup>11</sup> *obtain* comes from the Latin *obtinere*, “hold, hold fast”<sup>12</sup>). A further argument in favour of not introducing this image separately from the neutral RIGHTS ARE POSSESSIONS image is the fact that the verb *to hold* is very often used as an antonym of the verb *to buy* in the context of property. Furthermore, the binomial *to hold and enjoy the property* can be reduced to a single verb *enjoy*, suggesting that enjoying property includes possessing and holding it (Dobrić Basanež 2017, 159).

Another prevalent image in both languages is that of GAINING AND MAINTAINING RIGHTS IS FIGHTING A WAR, which accounts for numerous collocations (e.g., *defend / surrender / safeguard / protect / win / lose / champion the rights; pravo je izboreno / prekršeno / utvrđeno / narušeno; obrana prava*). Some units from this group might also induce the image of sports (e.g., *champion the rights*) or the verticality schema (e.g., *rights trump*), but since the collocate *champion* implies the action of a militant supporter of something,<sup>13</sup> and *trump* has been linked to *triumph*,<sup>14</sup> which in turn induces the meaning of winning as if by military force,<sup>15</sup> the decision that they belong to the war schema seemed reasonable. Other collocations from this group might invoke the metaphor RIGHT IS A BUILDING. A case in point may be illustrated with the collocation *utvrđeno pravo*, which gives the image of a fortress, but since we are well aware of the fact that such fortresses represent military strongholds, the image of a building

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<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=possess>. Accessed February 5, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=obtain>. Accessed February 5, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/champion>, Accessed April 10, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.etymonline.com/word/trump#etymonline\\_v\\_17893](https://www.etymonline.com/word/trump#etymonline_v_17893). Accessed April 10, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/triumph>. Accessed April 10, 2024.

seems to be rather insignificant here. This can be supported by the collocate *utvrđeno* that stems from the adjective *tvrd*, whose meaning, among other things, implies being “resistant to the usage of weapon”.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, although the collocations *to violate a right* and *prekršeno pravo* might belong to the image HARM IS AN OBSTACLE, they differ from the collocation *to break the law*, since, the verb *violate* does include a certain degree of violence<sup>17</sup> in the same way that the participle *prekršen* refers to being broken with force.<sup>18</sup> In addition, in the Croatian corpus there are several images of harm, which seem to be non-existent in English. One might argue that the collocates representing the image HARM IS DESTRUCTION (e.g., *pogaženo / zakinuto pravo; rezanje prava*) could also be grouped into the mapping IDEAS ARE PLANTS, since they all imply the meaning of stepping on or cutting down of a plant. However, given the fact that there are no antonymous pairs (e.g., *rights blossom / sprout*), their allocation to the negatively connoted image of destruction seemed justified. Another negative image of harm is the one where harm is coupled with the lowering of rights and is complemented with the image HELPING IS RAISING / EQUALIZING, which in turn invokes a positive semantic prosody in collocates *jednakost* and *uvećati*. Finally, the image HARM IS AN OBSTACLE only includes collocates where the noun *right* refers to ‘laws’ or ‘rules’.

In both corpora rights are perceived as containers, either full (e.g., *full rights; puno pravo*) or void (e.g., *void rights*), with the defined framework or scope (e.g., *opseg / okvir prava*) that can be extended or narrowed (e.g., *proširiti / suziti prava; extend rights / limited rights*). Some of these collocations could also belong to the concept of building as well, especially if we consider that the content of the container image is situated in its interior, whereas in the building concept, the content is its foundation and the outer shell (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 100). But since the container and the building metaphor are corresponding images, they can be freely mixed (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 100). This also applies to the image where the physical property of importance is coupled with centrality or depth, given the fact that in the building metaphor the ground level is the surface that defines both the content and the depth (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 100). The image IMPORTANCE IS CENTRALITY, however, seems more reasonable here, since when coupled with the noun *right* all these collocates invoke the meaning of being most important.

The image of more being up is also present in both corpora and is motivated by the verticality schema. Universal and absolute rights are thus rights that should belong to all, but this universality and absoluteness is culturally dependent, suggesting that some rights are more universal (e.g., *the right to life*) than the others (e.g., *the right to marry*) and are thus superior to them. Similarly, a divine right used to belong to people in power, who had control over ordinary citizens, as evidenced by the following concordance from the corpus:

*As early as the 7th century A.D., the Anglo-Saxon kings of England claimed to rule by divine right; to disobey them was to disobey God.* (hnn.us)

Rights themselves are also given the position of control or authority and are “up” when they allow or permit something. There is a slightly more static image of verticality visible in the collocates *extreme / collective rights* and *rights accrue*, where the amount is associated

<sup>16</sup> See [https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search\\_by\\_id&id=f19iWRh4](https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&id=f19iWRh4). Accessed January 20, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=violate>. Accessed January 20, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> See [https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search\\_by\\_id&id=elhvWhY%3D](https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&id=elhvWhY%3D). Accessed January 20, 2024.

with the vertical increase in size. The increase is at times rather neutral (e.g., *rights accrue*) and sometimes it implies danger (e.g., collective rights emerging as a result of insufficient protection by individual human rights<sup>19</sup>). Both corpora also reveal the image of change and relative motion, as evidenced by collocates denoting the time dimension (e.g., *terminate rights*; *rights expire*; *trajanje prava / pravo prestaje*).

Finally, in both corpora rights are portrayed as persons, but since personification as a subtype of ontological metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) is a general category, this paper dissects different aspects of persons, and reveals that rights are in the English corpus perceived as painters (e.g., *rights illustrate / depict*), while in the Croatian corpus they are presented as children (e.g., *ostavljeno / povrijeđeno pravo*) or employees (e.g., *suspendirano pravo*). These images are not present in the Master Metaphor List, but since Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz (1991) list OBLIGATIONS ARE CHILDREN as one of conceptual metaphors in the OTHER group, we opted for the same general schema. In the English corpus personifications also account for the SOCIETY IS A BODY metaphor, where rights are portrayed as vital, weak or resting on something.

The analysis in this paper has revealed that many collocates listed in the above sections are already lexicalized and we do not tend to consider the combinations into which they enter as metaphorical. The etymology, however, contradicts this claim and suggests, *inter alia*, that the component of “being sticky” is no longer present in the collocate *inherent*, but is instead replaced by the mental picture of being part of someone’s constitution or belonging to them by nature.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, we do not perceive the collocate *vest* as something that necessarily refers to clothes (from the Old French *vestir*, “to clothe; get dressed”<sup>21</sup>), but as something which entails the placing of rights into someone’s possession. In the same vein, today neither *neotuđiv* nor *inalienable* include the meaning of belonging to the other (which was the meaning of the Latin word *alius*, via which the word entered the English language), but are used strictly as legal terms, referring to the impossibility of being transferred to a third person. The collocation *narušeno pravo* no longer involves the mental picture of destroying a building in the same way, as *obrana prava* includes no physical defence or presence of the army. Nevertheless, although we might not perceive these collocates as metaphorical, there seems to be a cognitive structuring behind these combinations, which, as suggested above, very often cuts across cultures. The universality or near-universality (Kövecses 2006, 155) of metaphors between English and Croatian comes best to the foreground with event structure metaphors, where the only difference seems to be detected in the image of harm. It thus seems that, although the legal languages that were under scrutiny in this paper belong to different legal cultures, namely, common law and civil law, they view rights in the same way. Finally, it appears that the impact is more far-reaching than one tends to think, as it regulates the systematicity of metaphorical images, which in turn affects the semantic productivity of metaphorical collocations.

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<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.foei.org/what-are-collective-rights/>. Accessed April 10, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inherent>. Accessed June 18, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/legal/glossary/applicable-law>. Accessed June 11, 2023.

## 6 Conclusion

The contrastive analysis of metaphorical collocations of the nouns *right* and *pravo* conducted for the purpose of this paper suggests that the Croatian and English legal cultures mostly perceive these concepts in the same way, as witnessed by the similarities between the detected conceptual mappings. Furthermore, the mappings suggest that both nouns enter into combination with collocates that refer to events. What is more, although the differences in terminology and phraseology between the two legal languages may be vast, it seems that the conceptual images operating in their backgrounds do not tend to differ significantly.

The paper is an attempt to show that by combining a corpus-based approach and assigning conceptual metaphors to the extracted collocations, we can achieve a systematicity of metaphorical images. Furthermore, although the concepts operating in the background of metaphorical collocations can be analysed in more than one way, the inventory of semantically related collocates extracted from corpora is crucial in determining the basic mapping. Needless to say, the analysis in the paper is far from flawless and the concepts discussed in it are no “ultimate building blocks” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 76), and can be analysed further. Future research might therefore profit from the data contained in specialized legal corpora and include a contrastive analysis of the nouns *law* and *zakon* to provide a complete inventory comparable to all collocates of the polysemous noun *pravo*. Nonetheless, this study’s investigation of the metaphorical dimension of collocations based on comparable corpora marks an innovation in the study of legal phraseology, and can possibly represent a further strand of research within it.

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