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Businesswomen and war metaphors: 'Possessive, jealous and pugnacious'?[1]

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This paper investigates the metaphors employed for the description of women managers, hypothesising that using the WAR metaphor in this context reflects the hegemonic masculinity determining business discourse. To test the hypothesis, cognitive metaphor theory in combination with Critical Discourse Analysis is applied to two corpora of business magazine features on executives. Metaphorical expressions used to describe businesswomen are extracted from one corpus, and these expressions are then contrasted with those for businessmen. Moreover, the initial corpus is scanned for alternative metaphors for businesswomen. Findings indicate that metaphorical expressions such as *corporate killer* are used for first- and third-person reference across genders. Hence, the metaphorical concept BUSINESSWOMEN ARE WARRIORS and the male prototype it sustains seem pervasive. Moreover, alternatives like BUSINESSWOMEN ARE CHEERLEADERS/NURTURERS are not necessarily counter-discursive as they reproduce the binary gender paradigm characterising hegemonic masculinity.

KEYWORDS: Business discourse, gender identity, metaphor

In this paper, I shall draw on two corpora of U.S. and U.K. business magazine features to explore the metaphors, most notably the WAR metaphor, used in the description of businesswomen. In particular, by comparing the metaphorical description of women managers to that of their male peers, I will examine how the attested metaphorical expressions, mainly those of WAR, tie in with the notion of hegemonic masculinity. The central nature of this concept in business discourse is questioned by also looking for alternative metaphors in the data. By bringing in metaphor as the central feature, this study is poised to enrich previous work on the gender aspect of business discourse (Tannen 1994; Coates 1995; Kendall and Tannen 1997).

The paper is structured as follows: first, I provide the theoretical framework of combined cognitive metaphor theory and Critical Discourse Analysis that my study is embedded in. This theory then yields the hypothesis upon which this paper is based. Next, I describe the two corpora of business magazine features on female and male executives that I used for this empirical study. I then

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proceed to elaborate on the terminology used in the description of the data and the method employed to extract them from the corpora. The main part of this paper deals with the results of the empirical study and the conclusions to be drawn from them. That part provides a presentation and discussion of the quantitative evidence of descriptive metaphorical expressions in the corpora, which is then supplemented by a qualitative analysis. Finally, I summarise the findings and their relevance to my theoretical elaborations and give a brief outlook on possible future research in this area.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

This study started out from anecdotal evidence of a particular phenomenon, namely the description of businesswomen in terms of metaphorical expressions of war in business magazine features. Initial random searches for further corroboration showed that such descriptions were used by journalists as well as quoted as third-person reference by friends or colleagues describing the portrayed person. What is more, metaphorical expressions of war were also found as quoted self-descriptions. Like any text feature, this particular characteristic of business magazine texts can also be located in a tri-partite framework adapted from the main theoretical strands in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1998). This approach regards the socio-economic sphere (e.g. late capitalism) as the highest level of analysis, incorporating as it does various discourses, here defined by their topic (e.g. organisational discourse). In fact, discourse and the wider socio-economic domain are seen as being in a mutually constitutive relationship. Discourses are governed by particular discourse practices of how to produce, distribute and interpret the texts they give rise to (e.g. mission statements). These texts are in turn characterised by their specific features, such as pronoun usage or metaphorical expressions. Thus, all three levels actually determine each other. In the context of the present study, it is important to bring in the additional level of cognition, especially social cognition, defined as informing ideology in the form of mental models such as group membership, goals and activities. More often than not, these models are metaphorical, for example, in/out-group membership will be conceptualised by means of a CONTAINER metaphor, or goals take the form of metaphorical trajectories. By impacting on the self-image and ideology of discourse communities, social cognition is directly linked to the discourse expressing those mental models. Dominant models will obviously rise to prominence in the related discourse and materialise in the form of related metaphorical expressions at the textual level (e.g. *Fiorina rallied her troops* [FIO5A]).[2] Vice versa, this very prominence has repercussions on cognition, so that discourse and cognition reinforce each other in a cyclical fashion.

It is the metaphorical nature of cognition and its relation to discourse which makes me regard metaphorical expressions in texts as a particularly valuable

starting point for CDA. In the case of (business) magazine texts, the researcher has the added advantage of not only analysing those texts as a reflection of business media discourse but, by virtue of the quotations mentioned above, also being able to draw tentative conclusions about the possible characteristics of business discourse as a whole. However, such a general discourse is itself impacted on by the socio-economic practice of doing business in a globalised world. As I will argue below, this practice is very much characterised by its mostly male agents and concomitant masculinised models. The practice and its features are reflected in a discourse with a majority of male participants (be it text producers or recipients), gendered cognitive models of antagonism and fighting, and texts incorporating, among other markers, metaphorical expressions centering on aggression and competition.

Another issue worth mentioning in this context is the notion of hegemony, a central concept in CDA which originates from Gramsci's work on class hegemony in Western capitalism. According to Gramsci (1932–1934: 261), hegemony supplements the idea of securing power by means of violence because in hegemonic settings, existing power asymmetries between dominant and less dominant groups are based on the consensus of the marginalised group. Such consensus can be achieved by promising emotional or economic benefits. Alternatively, consent can also be manufactured by the dominant group ceding some privileges to the non-dominant one – never enough, however, to threaten the existing order. Applied to the social sphere of business, this strategy is, for example, evidenced by the fact that, in principle, women are given the opportunity to ascend to senior management positions in organisations. However, this ascent to the top level of corporate hierarchy all too often ends at the infamous 'glass ceiling'.[3] By being based on consent, hegemony describes a more or less fragile equilibrium between the ruling and the oppressed group. It is important to note that hegemony represents a dynamic process, with every status quo being but temporary and, therefore, open to being contested and changed. In this context, hegemonic power is supported by ideology, that is, discursive 'constructions of practices from particular perspectives' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 26–27).

In the introduction, I first presented the notion of hegemonic masculinity, a concept developed by Connell (1987), who applied Gramsci's theory to gender relations in late capitalism. With regard to the study at hand, it is interesting to see that Connell in a later paper (1998) discusses the globalised male manager, that is, the – mostly male – executive working for a multinational corporation, as a representative of hegemonic masculinity who has all but replaced the male archetype of the soldier. This view of the corporate elite meshes with my focus on the WAR metaphor since, in the generation of that metaphor, particular features from the source domain of war are mapped onto the target domain of business, thus rendering BUSINESS IS WAR and, by extension, BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE SOLDIERS. The WAR metaphor thus neatly combines two archetypes of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, it is used predominantly, if not exclusively, to

conceptualise the business domain and 'may [thus] help create [a] reality which is unequal and . . . male dominated' (Wilson 1992: 884). This reality is not uniform, however, as the relative prominence of non-violent CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP metaphors for businessmen suggests. After all, metaphors from that domain account for almost a quarter of all attested metaphorical descriptions of businessmen, ranking second behind the WARRIOR metaphor. Yet, it is this last metaphor which shows quantitative prominence in the portraits of businesspeople of both genders. The discursive function of such a dominant, selectively used metaphor is two-fold: while providing a common identity for the dominant in-group – in this case, businessmen – it simultaneously both constructs and excludes the out-group of businesswomen. What options does the out-group have for reacting to such a dominantly used metaphor?

One possibility would be to display what Connell (1987: 187) terms 'emphasized femininity', which is constructed as complementary to hegemonic masculinity. Favoured since it helps to sustain the hegemonic order, it centres on notions of compliance and softness. Indeed, as we will see when looking at the empirical results of this study, women managers are often metaphorically conceptualised in terms of caregivers (e.g. *her coddling of customers* [FIO5A], *mother of the booming handheld computer market* [COL7A]). Even more importantly, businesswomen also refer to themselves by means of that metaphor (e.g. *I . . . will water* [*the corporate culture*], *fertilise it, and see that it takes roots* [COL5A]). A second, perhaps less conventional, reaction to the WAR metaphor on the part of out-group members would be to adapt the central metaphor to themselves in the hope of becoming part of the dominant discourse and thus the power elite. In this case, women as members of a negatively evaluated group try to *de facto* leave their ascribed role through their linguistic behaviour, although 'the markers of the original group membership persist' (Augoustinos and Walker 1995: 114). Examples of this strategy are expressions like *I am ruthless in using every bullet I have* (LOS1A) or *my single greatest strength is . . . operating where everything else is exploding* (MOO1A). Such hegemonic co-option, or buying into a dominant paradigm, obviously comes at the price of neutralising subversive potential. However, that is exactly why this strategy is likely to meet with approval by the dominant group.[4] Both strategies are inherently problematic as they serve equally to sustain the gender binary so characteristic of hegemonic masculinity structures. And, despite the odd businessman referring to himself in terms of the CAREGIVER metaphor ([*my company*] *is like my baby child* [BOT1B]) and some gender-neutral self-descriptions of businesswomen (*when you sail, you don't get there in a straight line* [FIO3A]), it is such hegemonic masculinity that still dominates the corporate domain and the discourse on its representatives.

The above theoretical considerations lead me to formulate the following hypothesis: WAR metaphors in texts on executives are indicative of the hegemonic masculinity determining business (media) discourse and WAR metaphors used for the description of businesswomen represent a hegemonic co-option

Table 1: Corpus details

Corpus A	**Corpus B**
40 articles	40 articles
Five business magazines/papers	Five business magazines/papers
8 BusinessWeek	*10 BusinessWeek*
12 Economist	*12 Economist*
4 FinancialTimes	*13 FinancialTimes*
7 Forbes	*1 Forbes*
9 Fortune	*4 Fortune*
Published between 1996 and 2001	Published between 1995 and 2002
81,378 words	56,692 words
Average article length 2,034 words	Average article length 1,417 words
Eight compilations and 32 portraits of 20 different women	Four compilations and 36 portraits of 35 different men

strategy. I started testing the hypothesis and ascertaining whether there are actually counter-discursive metaphors by compiling two text corpora, which will be described in the subsequent section.

2. CORPUS DESCRIPTION

As mentioned above, the present study is based on two different corpora, with Corpus A consisting of articles describing businesswomen and Corpus B comprising portraits of businessmen. Table 1 shows that while both corpora include the same number of articles from the same five magazines and papers that were published in roughly the same period, the size of each corpus, in terms of total number of words, still differs substantially from the other. In fact, Corpus B is just under 70 percent (69.66%) of the size of Corpus A. This difference is due to the average article length being only 1,417 words in Corpus B as opposed to 2,034 words in Corpus A. It is furthermore interesting to note that there is twice the number of compilations – that is, portraits of a number of executives combined into one feature – to be found in Corpus A when compared to Corpus B. Moreover, the collections in Corpus A were compiled solely on the basis of gender (e.g. the *Fortune* list of 50 of the most powerful women in business), whereas the compilations in Corpus B either were originally mixed-gender – in which case I excluded the parts dedicated to the description of women – or deal with some particular aspect of business, like, for example, lists of analysts only. Apparently, being male alone does not qualify a businessperson to be included in a compilation, a selection process which constitutes maleness as the unmarked variety in business (media)

discourse. Furthermore, the range of women presented in single portraits is considerably smaller. Quantitatively speaking, this is obviously due to the fact that there simply are fewer women in high-profile management positions. From a qualitative point of view, however, it is noteworthy that some of the women featured have achieved a status of stardom. This can most clearly be seen by the fact that a quarter of the 40 articles making up Corpus A deals with Carleton Fiorina, CEO of Hewlett Packard.[5] *The Economist* (Princess 1999) addresses a problem inherent in this inflated attention: as the number of female CEOs is substantially lower than that of their male counterparts, females draw more media attention, which in turn increases expectations and thus pressure. As a result, female CEOs could show higher error ratios and, to complete the vicious circle, be appointed in even lower numbers.

Before looking at what results the corpora described above actually yield, I would like to briefly describe the terminology used in the description of the data and the methods employed to extract them.

3. TERMINOLOGY AND METHOD

In the following, I will distinguish three different levels of metaphorical conceptualisation, with the typeface representing them according to the conventions in cognitive semantics:

1. Metaphorical expressions are the actual phrases found in the corpora, for example, *she is a street fighter* (DEA1A).
2. Underlying these metaphorical expressions are conceptual metaphors; in the above example, the conceptual metaphor would be BUSINESSWOMEN ARE WARRIORS/FIGHTERS.
3. Broadening the perspective even further, I positioned the deduced conceptual metaphors in wider coherent metaphor complexes (a notion adapted from Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 97–105). The metaphor provided above could thus be seen as part of a coherent metaphor complex *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*, which comprises other, albeit less central metaphors as well (e.g. BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE ATHLETES).

In terms of methodology, I started my analysis at the first level, by searching the corpora for metaphorical expressions describing the portrayed person. I had not restricted my search to certain pre-defined metaphorical expressions and could thus not define a world-field containing metaphorically used lexemes. As I thus lacked a distinct set of search words to be run through a concordance program, the search was in this case a non-electronic one. (For the sake of completeness, I should add that I also included negations like *she is no shrinking violet* [BAR1aA], similes like *this will be like turning a battleship around* [SCA1A] and expressions referring to metaphor at a meta-level, for example, [*she*] *doesn't inspire lamb metaphors* [COL2A].) After having collected the metaphorical expressions used for the description of executives, I deduced

the conceptual metaphors underlying the expressions. Tracing back metaphorical expressions to conceptual metaphors was largely based on 'informed intuition' (Deignan 1999: 180), which, however, was supported by various phenomena indicating the central nature of the respective metaphor in discourse (Low 1999: 64): there are creative extensions of conventional expressions ([*I am*] *a relentlessly executing, no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners, be-in-front-with-the-shield-and-sword, go-to-war, stay-in-the-ditch-with-you executive* [COL7A]) as well as extensions of metaphorical expressions used by others. An example of the latter is the self-description in FIO3A – *in blackjack you double down . . . [a]nd we're going to double down* – which the writer takes up and elaborates at the end of the article (*she should hope she has picked the right cards*). Furthermore, explicit statements about the target domain following the A-is-B schema (*this is still a war* [GEO1B]) are there as are overt discussions of metaphors and the features mapped ([*she*] *doesn't inspire lamb metaphors* [COL2A]). Finally, text producers challenge others whose use of metaphorical expressions differs with regard to semantic overtones, an example being the following re-definition of the MACHINE metaphor found in BRI1A: '*She is a war machine' says* [*a colleague*] *. . . If Brink's a machine, she's a machine that likes to live well.*

The above examples show that language users – in this case, journalists and businesswomen – are acutely aware of the meaning potential of their metaphors. Extending these metaphors creatively and making them explicit at a meta-level thus does not only reproduce the underlying concept of businesspeople as soldiers or caregivers. Beyond that, creative and explicit metaphor use also recontextualizes such notions, sometimes even ironically so (see the exaggeration above from COL7A). The central metaphors thus pervade descriptions of businesspeople both horizontally, by being spread intertextually, as well as vertically, by being cognitively entrenched. It is because of these outcomes that I drew on the above five criteria to decide whether to count something as a dominant conceptual metaphor. A complete list of the conceptual metaphors identified in both corpora is provided in Table 2.

I began the analysis of the data by quantifying, firstly, the absolute number of relevant metaphorical expressions in each corpus (i.e. the expressions used in describing executives). This would help ascertain the weight of each deduced conceptual metaphor in quantitative terms. This figure ties in with the second parameter, the proportional relation of metaphorical expressions of war to all other metaphorical expressions attested in the data, which provides a first indication of the possible central position of the WAR metaphor in business (media) discourse.

Secondly, I embarked on qualitative analysis, identifying three coherent metaphor complexes to establish conceptual relations between the metaphors and further investigate which metaphors could be most central, for example, by looking at which are supported by other metaphors in a complex. Such conceptual support can be indicated synchronically, by juxtaposing

Table 2: Conceptual metaphors and number of metaphorical expressions

Metaphor	Number of metaphorical expressions (women)	Number of metaphorical expressions (men)
BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE . . .		
WARRIORS/FIGHTERS	89	59
MONARCHS	16	16
CAREGIVERS/PARENTS	13	5
CAPTAINS	10	19
(WILD) ANIMALS	9	5
(HARD) OBJECTS	7	1
ACTORS	5	7
DOCTORS/THERAPISTS	5	7
ATHLETES	4	14
GAMBLERS	4	6
CHEERLEADERS	3	0
FLOWERS	3	0
FOOD/EATERS	1/2	0/0
GARDENERS	3	7
HUNTERS	2	2
SPOUSES	2	1
BIRDS	2	1
DANCERS	1	0
DIAMONDS	1	0
ISLANDS	1	0
MACHINES	1	6
SHOWBOATS	1	0
STORMS	1	2
AMBASSADORS	0	1
ANGELS	0	1
ARTISTS	0	1
CAR DRIVERS	0	3
COWBOYS	0	1
FIREFIGHTERS	0	1
ESSENCE	0	1
MUSICIANS	0	2
PILOTS	0	1
POLICE	0	1
RELIGIOUS LEADERS	0	3
REBELS	0	1
RIDERS	0	2
STABLE OWNERS	0	2
SUITORS/BRIDES	0/0	5/4
SURFERS	0	1
WORKMEN	0	1
Total	**186**	**190**

two metaphors in the comparatively small unit of a single sentence (e.g. *she is a war machine* [BRI1A]). Further, conceptual links between metaphors in a complex can also be established diachronically, for instance, through etymological relations. (An example is the term *champion* – as in *she was a champion of local content* [ARR3A] – which ties in with war terminology, as it is etymologically related to *campaign*, both of which derive from the Latin word for *field*, which is *campus.* Originally, the champion was the last gladiator to persist in the arena or field, see Malszecki 1995: 12.) Although etymology is often of little if any synchronic importance, it nevertheless reveals the conceptual links between two domains that led to diachronic semantic change in the first place. Another diachronic help in establishing coherent metaphor complexes is the wider socio-historic context, for instance the function of both sports and games in boys' education as a preparation for war (Kidd 1990: 34).

I also looked at metaphorical expressions used for self-description but due to the scarcity of the respective data, these expressions do not constitute more than anecdotal evidence. However, further research in that direction may help reveal whether there is a difference between the internal and external perception of a person as conceptualised metaphorically.

We can first turn to the general quantitative results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Quantitative results

The absolute number of relevant metaphorical expressions in both corpora differs only very slightly; the number is 186 in Corpus A as opposed to 190 in Corpus B. Detailed figures, ordered in descending frequency in Corpus A, are provided in Table 2. In some respects, the results seem rather unspectacular. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the CAREGIVER metaphor is more often employed to describe businesswomen ([*she is*] *one of the most hands-on nurturers* [COL2A]) whereas the reverse is true of the ATHLETES metaphor ([*he*] *faces a lot of heavy lifting* [COL1B]). (For the tight socio-cultural links between sports and masculinity, see also Messner 1992.) Rather predictably as well, businessmen are not conceptualised as cheerleaders; this metaphor is not only highly culture-bound but also markedly gender-specific. In view of the hackneyed metaphor WOMEN ARE FLOWERS, the fact that businessmen are not described as flowers also fails to puzzle the researcher. Neither are male executives perceived as diamonds or dancers, two more concepts with strong cultural connotations of femininity. In view of the pervasive conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE FOOD (investigated for the English language by Hines 1999), it is furthermore predictable that male managers should not be metaphorised as food either.[6] To reverse the argument, businesswomen are neither car drivers nor cowboys, neither pilots nor police. Interestingly, they are not religious leaders either: the data yield no expressions such as **she is the prophet*

of the Internet age. Finally, while it can be expected that women are not conceptualised as suitors, it may come as a surprise that they are not described as metaphorical brides either. Yet, the relative prominence of this metaphor doublet in the description of businessmen can easily be accounted for by the fact that the MARRIAGE metaphor is one of the central metaphors of mergers and acquisitions discourse. In this context, the company to be taken over tends to be conceptualised as the passive bride while the company intending to take over another one is frequently represented as the aggressive suitor (Koller 2002). This phenomenon, together with the fact that CEOs often metonymically stand for the company they head, yields the gender-bending metaphor to be found in the data at hand.

However, what is indeed intriguing to note is that businessmen have a wider range of metaphors allocated to them: 33 as opposed to only 23 for businesswomen. This is most likely to be attributed to the fact that socio-economic, discursive and cognitive structures determined by hegemonic masculinity show more cultural models of masculinity than of femininity. Yet, the real surprise consists of the fact that the proportional relation of metaphorical expressions of war to the other attested metaphorical expressions differs most markedly between the two sets of data, accounting for 47.85 percent in Corpus A but only 31.05 percent in Corpus B. This means that, relatively speaking, businesswomen are more often described in terms of the WAR metaphor than are businessmen.

I would like to offer three possible explanations for this rather astonishing finding. It could be the case that describing women managers in metaphorical terms perceived as overly 'feminine' (such as BUSINESSWOMEN ARE FLOWERS or BUSINESSWOMEN ARE CAREGIVERS) is seen as politically incorrect. Against this, it could be held that the CAREGIVER metaphor is the third most frequent one to be used for female executives. An alternative way to account for the disproportionately high frequency of metaphorical expressions of war in Corpus A is the possibility that the WAR metaphor is applied to businesswomen more often in order to attenuate its inherent aggressiveness (on the notion of attenuating metaphors through their semantic context, see Eubanks 2000: 9–11). As still only a comparatively small number of women have first-hand experience as soldiers in a literal war and are thus more removed from the source domain, their very gender and the different experiences it entails might help to 'soften' the impact of the WAR metaphor. This suggestion is to some extent corroborated by the reverse phenomenon of businessmen having recourse to their literal military experience when describing their role as executives: 'War metaphors come easily to the decorated Vietnam veteran. After all, [he] says . . . "I know what it feels like to get your butt shot off" ' (Himelstein 1996; other examples can be found in Katzenbach and Santamaria 1999; Kilbane n.d.). Finally, it is possible that the higher frequency of the WAR metaphor as employed to describe businesswomen relates to excessive hegemonic co-opting to either become part of a power elite (in the case of self-description) or to reproduce the

dominant paradigm (in the case of third-person reference), indicating a process of 'out-Heroding Herod'.

Regardless of which of the three explanations offered here may be most plausible, or of whether the phenomenon can be accounted for by a combination of them, the fact remains that in a set of data otherwise meeting many gender stereotypes, the male prototype of the warrior is disproportionately often used to describe women managers. Just as importantly, the reverse does not take place; there is no equally prominent application of 'female' metaphorical concepts to men. While the numbers alone show that the WAR metaphor is central in business media texts describing executives, this additional imbalance suggests that women achieving in-group membership status in a male-defined socio-economic sphere could indeed be co-opted by being labelled in male terms.

I shall now turn to qualitative analysis to see if this claim can be upheld.

4.2 Qualitative results

As indicated in section 4, three coherent metaphor complexes in which to locate the attested conceptual metaphors were identified (for a complete list with examples, see Table 3).

The most prominent metaphor complex is *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*, which, moreover, represents a wide spectrum that can be determined according to the synchronic and diachronic parameters outlined above. At one end of the scale we find the WARRIOR/FIGHTER metaphor, which clearly foregrounds the aggressive aspect of business discourse and practice. The same aspect is also constituent of the metaphor doublet of hunters and (wild) animals. Following down the hunter's path, we arrive at the ATHLETE metaphor, which can be seen as positioned halfway between aggression and competition. In this context, sport is considered a sublimation of war, as both represent cultural practices centring on notions of fight, dominance, belief in authority and (male) solidarity (Wörsching 1999: 182). The competition aspect of sport is combined with playfulness in the GAMBLER metaphor, which marks the other end of the scale. Returning to the doublet of hunters and (wild) animals, it should be noted that the latter is dehumanising, a feature shared by the (HARD) OBJECTS metaphor and, finally, by the MACHINE metaphor. The conceptual relations between machines and war are acknowledged by Levett (1997: 18) and further explored by Morgan (1997: 15–16), who traces them back to Frederick the Great's explicit aim of turning the Prussian army into a mechanical entity consisting of what we would today call robots. The relations between the WAR and the MACHINE metaphor are thus constituted by the fact that both machines (and, metonymically, the organisation as a whole) and armies represent entities in which the separate parts are connected to form a structure serving to achieve pre-defined goals. The same conceptual link can also be found in Taylorism (Taylor 1911 [1998]) and its practical application as evidenced by

Table 3: Metaphor complexes, conceptual metaphors and metaphorical expressions

Metaphor complex	Metaphor	Example metaphorical expressions: Women	Example metaphorical expressions: Men
	BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE . . .		
AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION	WARRIORS/FIGHTERS	*foot soldiers such as Ms Knapp* (KNA1A)	[*he has*] *lost ground to rivals on . . . international fronts* (BON1B)
	(WILD) ANIMALS	*a shameless publicity hound* (CLA1A)	*the bêtes noires of the utility world* (LAY1B)
	ATHLETES	*women started jockeying for power* (COL8A)	[*he*] *is in the race of his career* (COL1B)
	MACHINES	[*she*] *pumped out an additional $9 billion* (COL5A)	[*he is*] *the linchpin of the largest industrial takeover* (WEL1B)
	(HARD) OBJECTS	*her colleagues nicknamed her 'Stonewall'* (BAR1bA)	*he was the hottest thing in high-tech security* (COL1B)
	HUNTERS	*her plan is to hunt bigger prey* (MOO1A)	[*he*] *bagged his most surprising prey* (COL1B)
	GAMBLERS	*she has picked the right cards* (FIO3A)	[*he*] *is making the biggest gamble of his career* (LAY1B)
CARE AND AFFECTION	CAREGIVERS/PARENTS	*her coddling of customers* (FIO5A)	[*he will*] *nurture the euro towards maturity* (TRI1B)
	SPOUSES	*a relatively short honeymoon period when she first took the job* (FIO8A)	*his divorce from AOL TimeWarner* (COL2B)
	DOCTORS/THERAPISTS	[*she*] *has breathed life into the ailing Avon* (COL5A)	[*he*] *has breathed new life into* [*the company*] (EIS2B)
	GARDENERS	*I . . . will water [the corporate culture], fertilise it, and see that it takes roots* (COL5A)	[*he*] *must cut through a thicket* (CAR1B)

CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP	MONARCHS	*Europe's queen of the web* (ARR2A)	[*he is*] *maintaining harmony among the company's fiefdoms* (COL1B)
	CAPTAINS	*Ms Fiorina took the helm* (FIO7A)	[*he*] *tries to put . . . operations back on an even keel* (SCH1cB)
	CAR DRIVERS	–	[*he*] *is at the wheel* (COL3B)
	CHEERLEADERS	*Scardino's tireless cheerleading* (SCA1A)	–
	PILOTS	–	[*he is*] *like a pilot guiding a plane* (COL3B)
	RELIGIOUS LEADERS	–	[*he*] *as apostle and seer of the internet* (MES1B)
	RIDERS	–	*he took the reins in 1981* (WEL1B)

Henry Ford's introduction of the conveyor belt in 1913. More recently, certain approaches to so-called human resources also betray a conceptual connection between war and machines in so far as in both, we find:

> . . . indifferent handling of employees [or soldiers], who are viewed as interchangeable cogs . . . [i]ndividual parts are never important in and of themselves; they are subordinate to the functioning of the whole. (Kendall and Kendall 1993: 154)

In the data at hand, this connection finds its most pronounced form in the expression *she is a war machine* (BRI1A).

The second coherent metaphor complex identified, *CARE AND AFFECTION*, includes metaphors of parenting, gardening and doctoring (see Table 3). While this complex may, on the surface, appear to be diametrically opposed to *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*, a closer look at the very GARDENING and DOCTORING metaphors just mentioned may modify this view. While undoubtedly incorporating notions of support and nurturing, instances of these metaphors sometimes also carry more than just overtones of elimination and aggression ([*she*] *plans to use a scalpel and not a machete* [FIO5A], *he . . . axed the business* [GRO1B]). Hybrid metaphorical expressions can also be found, sometimes even within the comparatively small unit of the sentence: *she did some serious housekeeping and bolstered the morale of the troops* (FIO4A).[7] Such hybridity not only tightens the links between WAR and other metaphors, but can also be regarded as evidence of the changing role of businesswomen as agents in a male-dominated social arena: while still having 'feminine' virtues ascribed to them, they are nevertheless simultaneously conceptualised in 'masculine' terms as well. Complexity does not stop here, however. The very complex of *CARE AND AFFECTION* brings back the dilemma indicated in Section 1: although appropriating metaphors from this realm to women steers clear of the hegemonic co-option associated with *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION* metaphors, it nevertheless helps to sustain the paradigm of hegemonic masculinity. After all, it reproduces the emphasised favoured femininity revolving around nurturing and selflessness which 'fits depressingly well into the military ideology about the role and purpose of women' (Chapkis 1988: 107).

CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP, the third metaphor complex, includes the very frequent CAPTAIN metaphor, which provides, among other expressions, the collocations *to take the helm* and *to be at the helm* (of a company).[8] The less frequent PILOT and CAR DRIVER metaphors are closely linked to this CAPTAIN metaphor. Next to it, the MONARCH metaphor features quite prominently. Both yield hybrid expressions linking them to the complex of *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*, such as [*s*]*he's . . . killing fiefdoms* (COL2A), [*her task*] *will be like turning a battleship around* (SCA1A) and *this buccaneering media baron* (COL2B).

To sum up, we could see in the previous sub-section that the sheer frequency of realisations of the WAR metaphor speaks for its centrality in business discourse. Qualitatively, this is corroborated by the evidence of metaphors from

other complexes being conceptually linked to, and forming hybrid expressions with, metaphors from the wide-ranging complex of *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*. Finally, it should be mentioned that there are indeed neutral metaphors, like, for example, the ACTOR metaphor (*Ms Fiorina has barnstormed the business world* [FIO6A], [*he*] *has been running FordMotor as a one-man show* [NAS1B]), but these are marginal both in terms of frequency and of their linkage to other, even less frequent metaphors such as BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE SHOWBOATS or BUSINESSWO/MEN ARE ARTISTS. Apparently, the intricate and hence pervasive *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION* complex takes centre stage in both business (media) discourse and its cognitive underpinnings as reflected in concrete texts. Moreover, the complex tends to co-opt seemingly alternative metaphorical concepts as well, reinforcing it even more.

Granted, the *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION* complex, as I see it, covers a wide range of metaphorical mental models, some of which are definitely more competitive than aggressive (e.g. the GAMBLER metaphor). Still, the notions of aggression and competition are central and both betray strong culturally gendered, that is, masculinised connotations. Qualitative analysis points in the same direction as quantitative investigations: business as social practice and discourse seems to be very much characterised by hegemonic masculinity, as reflected in the cognitive models at work in specific texts, specifically those on women managers.

5. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

To conclude, it can be said that by looking at metaphorical expressions used for the description of corporate executives in business magazines, this study has shown the centrality of the WAR metaphor in that sub-discourse, both quantitatively, in terms of frequency, and qualitatively, as regards the wide range covered by the *AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION* complex in which the WAR metaphor can be located. Moreover, there are intricate interrelations of other metaphors with the WAR metaphor; even seemingly opposed metaphorical expressions, for example, those of doctoring or gardening, prove to be partly semantically hybrid, combining features of the source domains of both aggression and caregiving (e.g. [*she*] *plans to use a scalpel and not a machete* [FIO5A] or '*I must have left a tree somewhere that needs to be cut down*' [LOS1A]). In other instances, hybridity is not so much intrametaphorical as achieved by the juxtaposition of metaphors. In any case, the WAR metaphor is very much supported in the concrete texts, indicating its central position in business (media) discourse, in the cognitive models underpinning it and in the wider socio-economic formation of globalised business practices. By virtue of the metaphor combining two archetypes of hegemonic masculinity, the soldier and the businessman, linguistic, discursive, cognitive and socio-economic practices related to business can be regarded as characterised by that hegemonic masculinity. In particular, it could be seen that businesswomen are, in

absolute terms, most often described in terms of the WAR metaphor – as are businessmen – and, in relative terms, more often so than are their male peers. Moreover, metaphorical expressions of war and fighting, when used for women, are occasionally found to be accompanied by positive semantic prosody, as the following two examples show: '*She is a cutthroat killer underneath', her friend says with admiration* (MOO1A); '*I've left a few dead bodies', she crows* (LOS1A). While these and similar examples could also indicate an ironic re-appropriation of dominant conceptual models in discourse, the fact remains that those models are best interpreted against the background of hegemonic masculinity. This reading of the data is not only suggested by the comparative analysis of descriptions of both businesswomen and men, yielding gender-specific CHEERLEADER versus COWBOY metaphors on the one hand and a relative overuse of the WARRIOR metaphor for women, which indicates hegemonic co-option, on the other. Further still, hegemonic masculinity also enters the texts in very literal terms, namely by businesswomen attributing their professional success to their upbringing 'as a boy' (GIB1A, MOO1A, RUS1A).

The topic of this study provides numerous further research possibilities, four of which I would like to single out here. Firstly, it would certainly be very rewarding to go beyond journalistic texts and look at metaphorical descriptions of businesswomen and men in other text types brought forth by business discourse. Spoken discourse, in particular, could yield interesting results in this respect. Secondly, a question not addressed in this paper is that of magazine-specific metaphor usage. Since I included both U.K. and U.S. publications in my corpora, this question is inextricably linked to the issue of culture-specific use of metaphors. The CHEERLEADER metaphor mentioned above gives an idea of the topics involved in such a context. Thirdly, it would be interesting to look at descriptions of businesswomen and men by colleagues and journalists: does their gender have any influence on metaphor usage? For instance, do men eschew *CARE AND AFFECTION* metaphors in describing other men to avoid imagery stereotypically associated with women and hence perceived as face-threatening in male–male interaction? These and other questions call for a more comprehensive database. The same finally holds true for investigating metaphors used for self-description. Although the results that can be gathered from the present data are too parsimonious to allow for any conclusions to be drawn, they still show that businesswomen, especially, sometimes use excessively violent and exaggerated metaphorical expressions of war to refer to themselves and other women (see Table 4), up to the point of (unconscious?) irony.

It is especially such self-descriptions that bring to mind Virginia Woolf's essay 'Three Guineas', written on the eve of World War II, in which she explores the interrelations between patriarchy, fascism and war. At that point in history, when women were only just beginning to enter the professions, Woolf asked the following anxious question:

Table 4: Self-descriptions according to metaphor complexes

Corpus A	Corpus B
AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION	*AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION*
'I've always taken a lot of flak' (COL1A) [*she*] *maintains that she's just a 'team member'* (COL2A) *'I think* [*being*] *a woman helps when* you're out in the field' *(COL3A)* '[*I am*] *a relentlessly executing, no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners, be-in-front-with-the-shield-and-sword, go-to-war, stay-in-the-ditch-with-you executive'* (COL7A) '[*my*] *husband is my secret weapon'* (COL7A) *'in blackjack, you double down –* [*a*]*nd we are going to double down'* (FIO3A) '[*I*] *can't leave my opponents with even a breath'* (LOS1A) *'I've left a few dead bodies behind me'* (LOS1A) *'I'm ruthless in using every bullet I have'* (LOS1A) *'My single greatest strength is seeing through the smoke into chaos, and operating where everything else is exploding'* (MOO1A) [*she*] *says . . . someone has to be willing to pull the trigger* (RUS1A)	[*he*] *proclaimed that Pepsi had won the Cola wars* (ENR1B) *he has said that he won't give up the fight* (ENR1B) '[*W*]*e want to put together a war chest . . .', he says* (GEO1B) *'This is still a war', he says* (GEO1B) *'ensure your survival', he says* (GUT1B) *he says he'll overcome such hurdles* (LAY1B) *'you get shot down'* [*he says*] (WEI1B)
CARE AND AFFECTION	*CARE AND AFFECTION*
'I had to shepherd the idea' (COL1A) *'I . . . will water [the corporate culture], fertilise it, and see that it takes roots'* (COL5A) *'I must have left a tree somewhere that needs to be cut down'* (LOS1A)	'[*my company*] *is like my baby child'* (BOT1B) *'You need to make a quick diagnosis'* (COL1B)* '[*my*] *Nissan revival plan is on track'* (GHO1B) *'it's hard to adopt teenagers into a close-knit family', he says* (GRO1B)
CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP	*CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP*
'when you sail, you don't get there in a straight line' (FIO3A)	–

* This expression is triggered by the position of the speaker as trained physician and CEO-elect of Novartis

> In another century or so if we practise the professions in the same way, shall we not be just as possessive, just as jealous, just as pugnacious . . . as these gentlemen are now? (Woolf 1929/1938 [1993]: 191)

Looking at my data, I cannot help thinking that some women, at least, have decided to answer this question in the affirmative.

NOTES

1. This paper is a revised version of the one given at the International Gender and Language Association Conference (IGALA) 2 at Lancaster University, Lancashire, U.K. in April 2002. I would like to thank the editors and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.
2. References to articles from the corpora give the first three lettters of the portrayed person's name or COL for a collection, followed by consecutive numbering and indication of the corpus (A: texts on businesswomen, B: texts on businessmen).
3. In 1998, 11.1 percent of all seats on U.S. boards were held by women (Brancato and Patterson 2001), with female CEOs accounting for less than 1 percent (Lavelle 2001). In the U.K. in 2001, 10 percent of all board members of the FTSE 100 companies were female, with a single one of those companies being headed by a woman managing director (Regiment 2001).
4. Such an appreciating attitude is perhaps most blatantly displayed in Malone's (1990) grossly titled polemic on the perceived new, 'unmasculine' style of doing business in Silicon Valley. The text, which is riddled with metaphorical expressions drawing on both male sexuality (*they've still got balls, to geld securities lawyers, to get hard again* Malone 1990: pars. 7, 39, 43) and violence/war (*in-the-trenches business experience*, *sharpening their knives for the kill* Malone 1990: pars. 21, 48), contrasts appearances and behaviours categorised as male (e.g. swearing, drinking and fighting) with those perceived as female (good table manners, well-groomed looks, sensitivity). Malone concludes that 'it seems that most of the lost testosterone in this valley is being used by its women', who are 'among the last tough guys' (1990: pars. 41, 9). Such unconditional praise and appreciation of anyone who displays hegemonic masculine characteristics is likely to prove a very effective means of guaranteeing complicity.
5. Fiorina also made it onto the cover of *BusinessWeek* three times in only one and a half years (issues: 2 August 1999, 19 February 2001 and 24 December 2001).
6. Note that the one instance of BUSINESSWOMEN ARE FOOD is topic-triggered: [*she is a*] *big cheese at $35billion* [*food maker*] *Kraft* (COL5A).
7. A somewhat different reading of the second part of the expression would associate *bolster*[*ing*] *the morale of the troops* not so much with the activities of a military leader but with female entertainers in the tradition of Marlene Dietrich or Vera Lynn singing in front of soldiers.
8. These collocational patterns are corroborated by both the 450-million-word Bank of English (January 2002) and the 100-million-word British National Corpus used as reference.

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