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How women are imagined through conceptual metaphors in United Nations Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security

Victoria Martín de la Rosa^a and Luis Miguel Lázaro^b

^aDepartamento de Filología Inglesa I, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain; ^bDepartamento de Educación Comparada e Historia de la Educación, Universidad de Valencia, Valencia, Spain

ABSTRACT

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is a landmark pronouncement on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Not only does this resolution highlight the important role of the involvement of women in peace processes, but it also stresses the importance of their equal participation in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace. Furthermore, it also triggers the approval of some other resolutions, which are all further elaborations on that first document. The aim of this paper is to analyse, from a cognitive linguistic perspective, the way in which women are actually narrated in these pronouncements by means of the two conceptual metaphors that are most often repeated: WOMEN ARE VICTIMS, typically found in earlier resolutions, and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE, as the metaphor that has gained more strength and visibility as new resolutions have continued to appear. As metaphors are the cognitive lenses we use to make sense of abstract concepts, it is important that we look closely at each of those metaphors to see how they shape the characterization of women in times of armed conflict and post-conflict and, in doing so, how they guide our understanding and behaviour towards them.

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Introduction

Language, mainly in the form of metaphor, is central to the process both of describing and, even, constituting reality. In this way, metaphors are symbolic constructs upon which reality is established and knowledge built (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Manning, 1979). Bearing in mind its pervasive presence when it comes to thinking and communicating complex phenomena in terms of domains that are more easily understood – by selecting and highlighting some given aspects, in this paper we set out to analyse two of the main metaphors that describe and shape the reality that women face in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict (WOMEN ARE VICTIMS and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE) as illustrated in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Examples of the metaphors we will be analysing are the following: (a) 'Noting that women in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict situations continue to be often considered *as victims* and *not as actors* in addressing and resolving situations of armed conflict [...]' (Resolution 1889), where both metaphors are pointed at; (b) '[...] encourages the forthcoming Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to integrate *women's participation, leadership and empowerment* as core to

the United Nation's strategy and responses' (Resolution 2242), in an attempt to empower women to perform key roles in public decision-making.

The understanding of these metaphors matter because they frame women's reality by selecting – and downplaying – certain aspects of their reality through the language chosen. Thus, the analysis conducted aims at uncovering the metaphors that permeate the discourse on the WPS agenda since, by doing so, we may more easily be aware of their power to constrain and guide our thinking and behaviour.

Background on Resolution 1325

Women's needs are largely marginalized in countries suffering from armed conflict and this is primarily due to their absence at all levels of the political decision-making process (Anderlini, 2000). Thus a need is felt to address this exclusion. Dealing with this gender dimension issue has been the driving force behind a number of important documents, pronouncements and conferences that have been held for nearly 25 years now, starting back in 1993 with the *World Conference on Human Rights* in Vienna and its important *Vienna Declaration*. This declaration condemns all types of gender-based violence and all forms of sexual exploitation and encourages States to fight violence against women (United Nations [UN], 1993).

The Fourth Women's World Conference in Beijing took place two years later. The outcome document (*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*) is considered very important since it created an internationally endorsed document that emphasized the rights of women in situations of armed conflict, and governments set out to defend their rights by implementing the necessary legislation. This document identified 12 critical areas of concern considered as representing the major obstacles to women's advancement – one of them being the sharing of power and decision-making – and some strategic objectives to be implemented in order to remove these problems for women. Even though all the areas are obviously interconnected, our focus in this paper will be precisely on power-sharing and decision-making in all areas of the peace process: peacekeeping, reconciliation and peacebuilding (UN, 1995).

It must be highlighted that the role of non-governmental-led international women's rights movements was extremely relevant throughout the following decade, in the successive conferences, to underline women's problems and concerns in the wake of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and its pre-process (Chen, 1995; Friedman, 2003).

Five years later, in May 2000, the Seminar in Windhoek, Namibia, ended with an agreement, *Windhoek Declaration or Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations*. This statement affirmed that to make peace support operations effective 'gender equality must permeate the entire mission at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in all aspects of the peace process' (UN, 2000, p. 1). Hence, this gender mainstreaming outlook (UN, 2001) – a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality throughout the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* in 1995 – followed by all UN agencies and a human rights approach contributed to generate the need to have women engaged in all areas of the peace process (Chinkin & Charlesworth, 2006).

The year 2000 also saw the five-year review of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (Beijing +5). The document that emerged from this Special Session of the General Assembly identified important obstacles in the relative exclusion of women from decision-making positions at all stages of peace processes. Therefore, in spite of the fact that peace agreements should recognize and accommodate women's perspectives, as admitted by O'Flynn and Russell (2011), the inadequate participation of women in peacebuilding and decision-making processes stems from stereotypical perceptions of men and women's roles in societies, largely favoured by the patriarchal structure of our society (Erzurum & Eren, 2014). The result is that few states had acted to implement the obligations undertaken back in 1995 to introduce changes in socio-political structures.

With all these precedents, a new milestone was reached with the approval of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325, a resolution that would have been difficult to agree upon without the

important work done (information, testimonials, pressure and discussion) by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Women and Armed Conflict Caucus, the group of member states that would later become known as the Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security – claiming the intellectual authorship of UNSCR 1325 (Shepherd, 2008) – , which was created in 2000 (Hill, Aboitiz, & Poehlman-Doumbouya, 2003; Tryggestad, 2009).

UNSCR 1325 is the keystone that sustains and gives meaning to the whole set of resolutions that the Security Council has adopted on the same subject. Logically, it has shaped the orientation and contents of the different National Plans regarding their development and practical applications (Fritz, Doering, & Gumru, 2011; Miller, Pournik, & Swaine, 2014), although its real impact on the implementation of the WPS agenda has unquestionably been limited (Ormhaug, 2014).

This is a resolution that works as a catalyst and serves as the platform whose language will be rewritten and strengthened in further resolutions. The resolutions that followed are: 1820 (June 2008); 1888 (September 2009); 1889 (October 2009); 1960 (December 2010), 2106 (June 2013), 2122 (October 2013) and 2242 (October 2015), which is the latest pronouncement of the Security Council on the issue of women, peace and security. The eight resolutions are therefore part of the same initiative to give more visibility to women's voices and to institute a gender perspective in the language of UN documents. Although we will be following a diachronic perspective in the analysis, all these resolutions can be grouped under two main topics: (1) women's leadership in Peace Making and Conflict Prevention (1325, 1889, 2122 and 2242), and (2) prevention of and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence (1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106).

In the light of these preliminary considerations, the present paper aims to analyse the representation of women in the UNSC resolutions mentioned thus far by applying the tool of cognitive linguistics and the new theory of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Hopefully, analysing the way in which the UN thinks and writes about women will provide an enriching perspective of the contribution of these resolutions in advancing women's position in peace processes.

The paper is structured as follows: the introductory section frames the topic. Next a review of the theoretical framework is conducted. This is followed by a discussion of the role of the Security Council and the resolutions that it publishes. In the analysis section, the main metaphors found in the UN documents selected are analysed in detail. Finally, in the last section some conclusions are drawn.

Theoretical review

This paper is mainly grounded on the work done on cognitive linguistics, particularly the new use of conceptual metaphor. This illuminating theory, which emphasizes that the world around us is not directly accessible but the result of a mental construction, has been applied to different fields such as economics (Herrera-Soler & White, 2011) and politics (Schön, 1993), but little work, if any, has been done in the field of women's issues, particularly UNSC resolutions on the WPS agenda.

Let us start by describing what a metaphor is. Metaphors can be considered as cognitive tools. This means that they are not just a question of language, but a way of thinking about the world around us. As Lakoff and Johnson claim, if we take the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, we do not just exploit this metaphor when using expressions such as 'this relationship isn't going *anywhere*' or 'we are *at a crossroads*' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), but rather we actually think of the so-called target category 'love' in terms of the source category 'journey', which implies that our expectations when thinking of a love relationship are based on our knowledge of journeys. The strength and success of conceptual metaphors rely on the fact that they tap into a widely shared and accepted cultural experience, as is the case of being on a journey.

A number of theories have been offered to specify how the two terms, source and target, interact to produce the metaphoric meanings. The most influential of them is the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by Lakoff and his colleagues (Goatly, 1997; Johnson, 1987; Kövecses, 2002, 2005; Lakoff, 1987, 2004, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Semino, 2008). According to them, conceptual metaphors,

as mentioned above, enable us to understand an abstract or inherently unstructured concept in terms of a more concrete, more highly structured one. At the root of metaphor there has always been a kind of comparison in an attempt to identify what two things have in common (Charteris-Black, 2004).

This takes us onto the rhetorical impact of metaphors since they can be used to shape an audience's perceptions, beliefs, values and, even, actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Paris, 2002). Stone (1988) claims that metaphors are an excellent persuasive strategy for the politician to justify certain courses of action and to induce a certain type of behaviour in an audience. Precisely for that reason, politicians choose those metaphors that best serve their purposes and that enhance the ideas generally taken for granted in our collective understanding by exploiting mappings between the source and target domains (Kövecses, 2005).

Two questions guide this paper: firstly, and in accordance with Edelman (1971), taking into account that 'each metaphor intensifies selected perceptions and ignores others' (p. 67), which aspects of women in peacebuilding are highlighted and which are left in the dark when analysing how women are represented (through metaphors) in the eight UNSC resolutions under discussion here? In other words, how does the wording of these resolutions characterize women and the complex reality they face during armed conflict and post-conflict situations? Secondly, although closely linked to the previous question, since metaphor is a persuasive device that serves a highly ideological function 'frequently employed in rhetorical and argumentative language' (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 7), how does its use influence the perception and narration of women in the UN spaces?

United Nations Security Council Resolutions analysed

Before examining each of the resolutions that are part of the WPS agenda to see how they are fleshed out by the two metaphors under analysis, some details on the role and functioning of the Security Council and the structure and type of language used in the resolutions will be given.

The security council

It is one of the six main organs of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of peace and security, created in the framework of the UN Charter which was approved at San Francisco, 1945 (Bailey & Daws, 1998; Wolfrum & Philipp, 1995). As highlighted by Orakhelashvili (2005) 'The United Nations Security Council is the most powerful institutional body ever established at the global level' (p. 59).

As far as the functioning of the Security Council is concerned, it should be emphasized that although the Security Council consists of a limited number of UN members (5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members, who are elected every 2 years by the General Assembly), it acts on behalf of all of them, as can be seen in Article 24(1) of the UN Charter. The Security Council has the right to take decisions which binds not only its members (Articles 2(5), 25 and 49) but also non-members (Article 2(6)); at any rate, it must be said that decisions are binding 'only if they are in accordance with the Charter' (Orakhelashvili, 2005, p. 67). Decisions are restricted by unanimity, which means that the five permanent members have the right to block any substantive proposals (Kelsen, 2001; Malone, 2008).

Language used in resolutions

We commence by highlighting the interesting and unique structure of this type of documents (UN Editing Section, 1984). Firstly, they consist of unnumbered preambular paragraphs, which present the background and give some guidance pertaining to the purpose of the resolution; secondly, we find operative paragraphs, which number the actions that they are agreeing to take. The focus of our analysis will be precisely on the second part, the operative paragraphs, where we will be examining the measures taken by the Security Council on the WPS agenda.

As for the type of language used in resolutions, even though they are placed within the category of legal language, resolutions show some typical elements of diplomatic language, where there is a need

for a high degree of 'vagueness' (Endicott, 2000; Scotto di Carlo, 2013). This vagueness seems to be motivated by the need to find agreement on delicate issues among the parties involved. In fact, the phrasing of most of the operative paragraphs (154 in total) is mostly conducted in gentle and polite language.

In this section, we will now examine in detail the eight different resolutions and the language used to talk about women in the UN WPS agenda. Analysis of the language used reveals that the metaphors that are most relevant to the issue at stake, since they shape many of the linguistic expressions across resolutions, are as follows: WOMEN ARE VICTIMS, which is a frequent metaphor in early resolutions, and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE, which clearly gains more relevance and visibility as new resolutions have continued to appear. In other words, those two metaphors have been identified and chosen to be analysed because they are the conceptual package – a type of recurring cognitive structure – underlying many of the expressions that appear in the resolutions.

For instance, expressions found in different resolutions such as the need to introduce targeted measures against parties 'who commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and children' (SCR 1820) portray women, in particular, as people who are harmed by their condition of being women. Readers are pushed to retrieve a perception of women where they are the target of all kinds of violence and even disease. If, on the other hand, we come across expressions where the Security Council encourages Member States 'to deploy greater numbers of female military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations' (SCR 1960), women are presented in a new light, where the focus is not on their protection but on their empowerment in peacebuilding. That is to say, a metaphor works by highlighting conceptual similarities between two different concepts or experiences. Following the metaphor women as victims, women are seen through the filter of victims, but following the metaphor women as agents of change, they will be seen instead through the filter of necessary contributors to change in peace processes, activating a different type of knowledge in each case.

In all fairness, it must be said that the metaphor WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE had already been around for a long time in the discourse used by civil society organizations before UN advocates introduced it into Security Council documents. This is not surprising since, as discussed by Cohn, Kinsella, and Gibbings (2004), the Security Council was not as open to gender mainstreaming as the General Assembly, which means that the passing of Resolution 1325 was already quite an achievement for this institution.

A transition will be noticed in the language used in the UNSC resolutions in the following analysis, starting with the metaphor WOMEN ARE VICTIMS and moving later onto the more widespread metaphor WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE, which signals a major change in the Security Council's perception and wording of the role of women in peacebuilding.

Before moving any further, it is important to mention that we decided to stick to the generalized concepts of 'women', 'girls' and 'children' because they do turn up repeatedly in our corpus, even though those concepts are used without giving thought to how those individuals articulate a range of forms of participation in the different communities of practice – the spaces where individuals become engaged in social endeavours negotiating meanings – where they interact (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). The reason why that is so may lie in the fact that women are historically underrepresented in the usual work conducted in the UNSC, which means that the language chosen depends mostly on male actors, politicians and diplomats who – in their role of defining and executing policies – seem keen to perpetuate a division which benefits men over women. Hence, the role that international organizations play in actualizing the current systems of power can be seen at stake here. This means that unexamined stereotypes and gender-based biases are built into the system and at the very heart of their institutional culture. Unless those biases are challenged, the right measures to improve gender equality will not be implemented.

Let us now look in detail at each of the eight documents to see how women are framed in the different resolutions by using the two conceptual metaphors: WOMEN ARE VICTIMS, and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE, which will work as our frame of reference when pursuing the analysis. Right before the end of this section, a table will be provided with the frequency of each conceptual metaphor across resolutions .

- (1) *In Resolution 1325* (October 2000), the need to mainstream a gender perspective into peace-keeping operations is introduced by claiming how important women's presence is in peace agreements. Consequently, women are presented as necessary actors in decision-making levels in conflict-resolution and peace processes. On the other hand, the most recurrent theme is the need to protect 'women and girls' from gender-based violence, particularly crimes such as rape and sexual abuse. Regarding the frequent groupings of 'women and girls' and – as will be seen – 'women and children', let us say that the vulnerability of children/girls ends up permeating women through those binominal constructions, which are repeated not only across resolutions but in many previous documents by international organizations as far back as the International Labour Organization (1919) and the League of Nations (1920). Put another way, this portrayal implicitly characterizes women as 'non-adults'.
- (2) *In Resolution 1820* (June 2008), women tend to be presented, together with girls, as the receptors of all kinds of sexual violence, which conceals their potential contribution to peace processes. However, although this is an infrequent occurrence, they are also portrayed as necessary participants in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution or their role as peacekeepers or police.
- (3) *Resolution 1888* (September 2009) reverses the trend by starting a new and timid characterization of women. Thus, even though examples such as 'protection of women and children from rape and other sexual violence' are still found, women gain more visibility in their important role when it comes to rebuilding society, as for example entering mediation and decision-making processes.
- (4) *Resolution 1889* (October 2009). Although the gender mainstreaming perspective is hardly mentioned in the previous two resolutions, the need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in post-conflict situations is now introduced with strength. Nevertheless, the construction 'women and girls' as the receptors of all forms of violence is still found as part of the discourse of this new resolution.
- (5) *In Resolution 1960* (December 2010), the patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence are not any longer attached to the concepts of 'women and girls' or 'women and children', but rather they are referred to as gender-based violence. This implies approaching and understanding the concept of violence from a human rights perspective, as violence can be inflicted upon women and men as well. Besides, women are presented mainly in the light of important contributors to bring about changes in peace processes, which means that a new dimension and new space for women is opened up.
- (6) *Resolution 2106* (June 2013), although the construction 'women and girls' and 'women and children' as individuals who require protection are not uncommon, the aspect of women that is most often raised is precisely the important role they can play in addressing sexual violence. This means that the perspective is completely changed from protecting women to having them involved in fighting against sexual violence.
- (7) *Resolution 2122* (October 2013). As in the previous resolution we still come across the construction 'women and girls' as individuals who need to be taken care of, but the most recurrent theme in the resolution is the necessary participation and empowerment of women in all aspects of conflict and post-conflict situations to promote gender equality.
- (8) *Resolution 2242* (October 2015). In this last resolution the gender mainstreaming efforts are brought to the fore completely by emphasizing the need for women to be empowered by increasing the funding on programmes that further gender equality, or by trying to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout the activities on the WPS agenda, for example. Furthermore, the leadership and empowerment of women, as complete and developed agents, gain all the focus and currency. In other words, women have become fully developed agents whose perspectives need to be integrated in order to be part of the response given to gender-based violence (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of each conceptual metaphor across resolutions.

UNSC resolutions	1) Conceptual metaphor	2) Conceptual metaphor
	Women are victims	Women are agents of change
1325	10 tokens of metaphor Women and girls: 8 Women: 2	6 tokens of metaphor
1820	11 tokens of metaphor Women and children: 2 Women and girls: 9	5 tokens of metaphor
1888	4 tokens of metaphor Women and children: 4	5 tokens of metaphor
1889	8 tokens of metaphor Women and girls: 8 cases	16 tokens of metaphor
1960	None in the operative paragraphs	2 tokens of metaphor
2106	7 tokens of metaphor Women and children: 3 Women and girls: 3 Women: 1	12 tokens of metaphor
2122	7 tokens of metaphor Women and girls: 5 Women: 2	16 tokens of metaphor
2242	6 tokens of metaphor Women and girls: 2 Women: 4	20 tokens of metaphor
TOTAL	53 tokens of metaphor	82 tokens of metaphor

Conceptual metaphors found in UNSC Resolutions on the WPS agenda

As mentioned throughout the paper, the two metaphors that will be examined in detail are WOMEN ARE VICTIMS and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE in an effort to reveal the implications of the use of those two metaphors and the way they guide people's thinking and behaviour.

Women are victims

This heading by no means intends to downplay the suffering that women have to go through during and after armed conflict, but rather to show that women, as a result of the hardships they have to bear, are sometimes portrayed as victims, who need to be looked after by male members of society¹. Consequently, reproducing a section of Resolution 1889 may be a good way to begin, since it touches on the issue of considering women as victims:

Noting that women in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict situations continue to be often considered as victims and not as actors in addressing and resolving situations of armed conflict [...] and stressing the need to focus not only on protection of women but also on their empowerment in peacebuilding. (Resolution 1889)

Hence, although the resolutions are meant to be about empowering women, focusing on what they can contribute to peace processes, the metaphor that is still called upon in earlier resolutions on the WPS agenda is that of women seen as victims, paying particular attention to their vulnerabilities and needs. However, this characterization seems to lose strength as new resolutions have appeared, particularly evident in Resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

In this narrative, where in times of armed conflict women are often portrayed as victims of violence, a link is established between sex and security, as suggested by Charlesworth (2008) when she says that 'women have become the metaphor for victim in war' (p. 358).

Following Charteris-Black (2004, 2011), the evaluation resulting from an approach to women where they are described as people who are taken advantage of and made to suffer is quite negative since it leaves no other alternative but to feel sympathy for them. This opens up a scenario where all the space is occupied by the concept of protection, with no room for any other approaches. In other words, once this metaphor has been activated, where the target 'women' is presented in terms of the source 'victims',

all the knowledge resulting from the mapping will be consistent with the audience's knowledge of the metaphor's source. Therefore, the mapping highlights which features of the target are important to be considered or which actions should be taken, while concealing or diverting attention away from other aspects. That is to say, if women are viewed as victims, the connotations triggered are those of suffering and damage. Conceptual mapping, on the other hand, may also guide behaviour, which shows the ideological dimension of metaphor. Thus, if people use their knowledge about victims to inform how to think and behave towards women, it is very likely that they will infer women need protection in order to be saved from the harm inflicted upon them.

Below we provide one example, if there is one, for each of the eight resolutions in our study. The same process will be followed in the analysis of the following metaphor. The words in italics emphasize the part of the sentence that captures the metaphor.

Examples:

- (1) [The Security Council] Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect *women and girls from gendered violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse*, [...]; Resolution 1325.
- (2) Affirms [...] to take into consideration the appropriateness of targeted and graduated measures against parties to situations of armed conflict who commit *rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls* [...]; Resolution 1820.
- (3) Requests the Secretary-General [...] information on steps taken to implement measures to protect civilians, particularly *women and children, against sexual violence*; Resolution 1888.
- (4) Calls upon all parties to armed conflicts [...] and ensure the protection of all civilians inhabiting those camps, in particular *women and girls, from all forms of violence*, [...]; Resolution 1889.
- (5) No examples found in the operative paragraphs for Resolution 1960.
- (6) Recognizes that *women* who have been forcefully abducted into armed groups and armed forces, *as well as children, are especially vulnerable to sexual violence* in armed conflict and post-conflict situations [...]; Resolution 2106.
- (7) Expressing deep concern at the full range of threats and *human rights violations and abuses experienced by women* in armed conflict and post-conflict resolutions [...]; Resolution 2122.
- (8) Notes that the fight against impunity for *the most serious crimes of international concern committed against women and girls* [...]; Resolution 2242.

Women are agents of change

Women – portrayed as a group with undervalued leadership skills – gain a more prominent role as new resolutions are pronounced, particularly from Resolution 1889 onwards, where the need to increase their presence in peace processes is profoundly stressed. Hence, a positive shift will be noticed in the Council's language throughout the different resolutions: while Resolutions 1325 and 1820 frequently portray women as in need of protection, in Resolution 1888 there is a slight change since for the first time the number of tokens for the metaphor WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE is higher than for WOMEN ARE VICTIMS. From then on, as can be seen in Resolution 1889, there is a clear move towards assigning more agency to female subjects. With the exception of Resolution 1960, where there are just two tokens (for 'women as agents of change'), the position of empowering women is then eagerly promoted in Resolutions 2106 and 2122, where women's role as agents of change is emphasized clearly over their role as recipients of assistance. Finally, in the last pronouncement, Resolution 2242, women's empowerment becomes the main topic of the resolution as can be seen in the overwhelming number of tokens, 20, for the metaphor 'women as agents of change'. If we take a look at the final figures for both metaphors, the difference is significant, with 53 tokens for the metaphor 'women as victims' against 82 tokens for 'women as agents of change'.

In line with the clear emergence of a new scenario where women are pictured as active agents, many different examples could be highlighted, but only one case in point will be mentioned here. Back in March 2014 Bint Khalid Al Qasimi, the first woman to become a government minister in the United Arab Emirates affirmed, at the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition, 'we need to look beyond that [seeing women only as victims or in need of assistance] and see them as agents of change, as brokers of peace and as deliverers of assistance' (Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition [DIHAD], 2014). This statement reflects well the need felt over the past 20 years to revise how women are conceived and go beyond: giving more visibility to their undervalued political and leadership skills as agents of change.

Another important issue which needs to be addressed in detail is that of gender equality since, in order for peace and security to be in place, the gender dimension – through the strategy of gender mainstreaming – needs to be taken into account. Hence, women's empowerment and gender equality form a dynamic continuum and are felt to be crucial to ensure gender balance, equality and peace, as commitments which were already stated in Resolution 1325. The latter acknowledged that 'peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men' and that equal access and full participation of women at all decision-making levels are fundamentally important for upkeeping and promoting peace and security. This explains why the objective of gender equality appears repeatedly in the different resolutions.

Turning to Charteris-Black (2004, 2011), the evaluation resulting from an approach to women where they are conceived of as active agents is undoubtedly very positive as it opens up a completely different scenario to that of victims, where the role of women is enhanced by enabling them to express their concerns and fulfil their potential for everyone's benefit: their household and their communities. The main benefit arising from the use of this metaphor is that the sought-after goal of gender equality can only be fulfilled if women gain in their capacity as actors in the whole process of public decision-making. Thus, giving them voice is a good platform for them to have access to knowledge and services in the same way as men. By means of this mapping – where women are portrayed as agents of change, metaphor use enables the audience to access their knowledge of the source 'agents of change' as a framework for interpreting and evaluating aspects of the target 'women'. Hence, in the same manner as the previous metaphor, the knowledge resulting from the mapping will be consistent with the metaphoric framing provided. In this way, the message can shape people's attitude towards aspects of the target: if women are agents of change, they should be expected to be empowered and their leadership promoted in order for them to contribute to society with all their potential.

However, it is important to point out that even though the use of this metaphor seems to imply that all women without exception fit that generalization, in real terms the degree of variability in behaviour across sex categories is very wide and does not quite correspond with the picture offered by the metaphor. An illustrative example of this is the fact that women can also be prominent agents of violence, as was the case in Rwanda (Sharlach, 1999), or be actively involved in armed conflict, as can be seen in the cases of Peshmerga women's regiment and Colombian FARC and ELN guerrillas.

Let us look at the examples found in the different resolutions:

- (9) [The Security Council] Urges Member States to ensure *increased representation of women at all decision-making levels* in national, regional and international institutions[...]; Resolution 1325.
- (10) [...], and encourages all parties to such talks to facilitate *the equal and full participation of women at decision-making levels*; Resolution 1820.
- (11) Encourages Member States to *deploy greater numbers of female military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations* [...]; Resolution 1888.
- (12) Expresses its intention, [...] to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and *the empowerment of women in post-conflict situations* [...]; Resolution 1889.
- (13) Welcomes the work of gender advisers; looks forward to the *appointment of more women protection advisers to peacekeeping missions*, [...]; Resolution 1960.

- (14) [...] further encourages troop- and police-contributing countries to *increase the number of women recruited and deployed in peace operations*; Resolution 2106.
- (15) Reiterates its intention [...] to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and the *empowerment of women in conflict and post-conflict situations*, [...]; Resolution 2122.
- (16) Welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to prioritize the *appointment of more women in senior United Nations leadership positions* [...]; Resolution 2242.

Conclusion

The main goal of this paper has been to analyse the way UN Security Council resolutions on the WPS agenda talk about the issue of women involvement in peace processes through conceptual metaphors. In fact, this agenda has been a long process. We decided to focus on Resolution 1325 as it was the first document drafted to ensure a more inclusive approach to peacebuilding and security, where women should be seen as important actors. The other resolutions selected (pronouncements 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242) come to further elaborate on that first document.

The two metaphors analysed are the following: WOMEN ARE VICTIMS and WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE. As regards the first one, women are sometimes portrayed in several of the UNSC documents as targets of violence, which means that their potential to contribute as actors in addressing situations of armed conflict is underestimated. At any rate, this metaphor is substituted, particularly in Resolutions 2122 and 2242, by an approach where women's empowerment is repeatedly claimed. Therefore, the narrative in resolutions changes from a perspective where women need to be protected from sexual violence to another in which they need to be empowered and involved in the fight against it.

Let us now examine the two questions guiding this paper. Concerning the first one, the aspects of women highlighted in the different resolutions are: vulnerability, which means that women, together with children and girls, are to be protected by the male members of our society; and their role as victims, as members of society who are the target of all kinds of violence, mainly sexual violence. On the other hand, leadership skills, empowerment and engagement in peace processes, not as frequently found in the first three resolutions, emerge with force in Resolution 1889. With the exception of Resolution 1960, where there are just two tokens, women are presented as more active agents of change in Resolutions 2106 and 2122, and particularly in Resolution 2242, where women's engagement in peace processes features most prominently. Thus, regarding the characterization of women in UNSC resolutions, the question is whether the two metaphors analysed exhaust the complex reality of women during and after conflict or whether there is more that still needs to be discovered from the use of other metaphors. The answer is that to capture women's complex and multifaceted reality, we need to simultaneously rely on a number of different metaphors, each of which illuminates different aspects in women's life. Other metaphors that can be identified after a close analysis of the linguistic expressions in use are, for example, WOMEN ARE OUTCAST MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. This last metaphor presents women as excluded from society by means of the concept of displacement, which implies that women – in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict situations – are pushed to the outside of the community where the benefits of belonging to such community disappear. An example taken from Resolution 2122 is the following: 'Expressing concern at women's exacerbated vulnerability in armed conflict and post-conflict situations particularly in relation to forced displacement [...]'. The combination of all those metaphors will very likely provide us with deeper insight into the full characterization of women.

As far as the second question is concerned, if the development of ideology depends on the choice of metaphors, it is thus deduced that they serve to articulate points of view and orient an audience's perceptions and behaviour. Returning to the first metaphor used, WOMEN ARE VICTIMS, it works as a conceptual path that guides the audience into perceiving the target 'women' in the light of the source 'victims', resulting in beliefs and a certain type of behaviour towards women that are consistent with that particular framing of reality. In other words, this portrayal prepares readers into readily accepting the solution adopted: to offer them protection. Furthermore, as part of the knowledge transferred

between both domains, this portrayal of women will trigger in readers some kind of sympathy and sorrow towards them – as is the case towards children and girls. All this results in the fact that perceiving women as victims and not in need of freedom to face new challenges diverts attention away from their potential to implement change in peace processes.

In the second metaphor, *WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE*, the focus is no longer on the vulnerability of women emerging from conflicts, but rather on strengthening the capacity women have to take on key roles as agents of change. In fact, implementing a notion of peace 'defined in terms of human security' (Anderlini, 2007, p. 8) will only be possible if women are allowed to join in.

As metaphoric mappings are not just attractive figures of speech but rather they shape people's perception (Landau, Robinson, & Meier, 2013), the concept of women is now viewed through a completely different filter, where the aspects brought to the audience's attention are different: the focus is not on the protection that women should be offered, which is completely downplayed, but rather on their empowerment, equal participation and leadership to bring about a qualitative change in contemporary security policy. This explains well the ideological power behind the use of metaphors, as the same concept – depending on how it is presented through the metaphoric mapping chosen – will call for either protection or for empowerment.

Returning to the beginning of this paper, we would like to say that the non-participation of women at the peace table, whose experiences are left out, has meant that visibility has not been given to crimes committed against women. Consequently, as claimed by a former US Ambassador in Africa, 'the standard practice for years has been that men forgive men for crimes committed against women' (Anderlini, 2005, p. 105).

The involvement of civil society groups has proved to be very important to underline women's problems and concerns. Nevertheless, the scholar Nilsson (2012) goes much further by demonstrating, in his analysis of 83 peace agreements from 1989 to 2004, that the inclusion of civil society actors – religious groups, women's organizations and human rights groups – 'increases the durability of peace' (p. 245). On the strength of the very positive results obtained, working with those civil society groups seems to be one of the clear avenues that should be pursued and explored further.

The main claim of this paper is that as new resolutions have been published, especially Resolutions 2122 and 2242, greater impetus has been given to positioning women in a new light, where the need for protection was no longer the focus, but rather their empowerment and greater role in decision-making positions. This is supported by the linguistic analysis conducted: the strengthening of the metaphor *WOMEN ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE* across resolutions clearly shows the new way women are imagined and narrated in the UN spaces.

Notwithstanding this progress, there are still very important aspects of the agency of women in peace processes which should become a reality, such as the necessary funding for the National Action Plans and, particularly, the essential presence of women on equal terms with men at negotiating tables². The gap may be narrowing when it comes to the presence of women in public decision-making roles, but it is still wide as regards their presence at the peace table (Women in the World [WITW] Staff, 2015).

As has been remarked, the type of language used in resolutions, taking into account the need to find consensus on delicate issues, does not help much in making changes effective and legally enforceable. This leads us to conclude that, in spite of internationally adopted commitments to involve women in peace processes, rhetoric and reality still seem to be far apart.

Notes

1. The same metaphor can be found in UNSCRs 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1612 (2005), 2225 (2015), among others, which establish measures to protect children during and after armed conflict.
2. We can refer to the study conducted by Castillo Díaz and Tordjam (2012) where – relying on a representative sample of major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 – they concluded that 'only 4 percent of signatories, 2.4 percent of chief mediators, 3.7 percent of witnesses and 9 percent of negotiators are women' (p. 3). Another excellent example of this situation is Syria's agreement in Paris – December 2015 – where no women at all were sitting at the table.

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Notes on contributors

Victoria Martín de la Rosa is an English lecturer at Complutense University in Madrid. Her research interests focus on the study of metaphor in such different fields as advertising, politics and education, and the study of evidential markers in different policy documents, conducted within the framework of a national project 'A Discourse-Pragmatic Study of English and other European Languages (EVIDISPRAG)'.

Luis Miguel Lázaro is a professor of Theory and History of Education at the University of Valencia. He works mostly in the field of Comparative and International Education, where he has supervised many research projects at national and international levels. Within this field he has focused particularly on equity and education, the history of women's education and human rights and education. He belongs to the *Global Citizenship Education* International Advisory Committee of the *UNESCO Chair in Global Learning and Global Citizenship Education* at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

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