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# Politics, sex, religion and the cognitive model of SEPARATION: the impact of schemas on the interpretation of lexical items and forms of argumentation\*

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## Abstract

This paper investigates the application of the idealized cognitive model of SEPARATION to the domains of politics, marriage and church-state relations in the Canadian cultural context, as attested by data from English and French-Canadian websites of the collocations and topoi associated with the nouns *separation/séparation* and the adjectives/participles *separate/separated/séparé*. SEPARATION is argued to involve three subschemas: NEGATION OF LINK, FORCE and BARRIER. The adequacy of the cognitive model of SEPARATION for the three domains is evaluated. Applied to the separation of Quebec from Canada, NEGATION OF LINK seems applicable, along with BARRIER. Regarding marital contexts, NEGATION OF LINK seems an apt description of the separation of a couple, although the data suggests that this factor has less importance in the French-Canadian context. The BARRIER subschema corresponds to the fact that separated couples no longer live together. The FORCE schema is justified by the conflict that generally accompanies a couple's break-up. As regards church-state relations, the SEPARATION schema is argued to be more problematic. While NEGATION OF LINK seems applicable, in that church and state are different institutions, if the goal of the state is the pursuit of the temporal common good and that of the church the pursuit of the spiritual common good, church and state share the common goal of the common good.

## 1. Introduction

This paper investigates the implications for the construal of political and social and reality of recourse to the image schema of SEPARATION in the domains of politics, marriage and church-state relations using data from English and French-Canadian websites involving the following lexical items: *separate*, *separated*, *séparé(e)*, *separation*, *séparation*, *to separate* and *(se) séparer*. In cognitive linguistics, image schemas are defined as embodied but highly schematic representations of spatial and force-dynamic relations (cf. Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987, Lakoff and Johnson 1999, Gibbs and Colston 2006). Although it is not listed by either Lakoff 1987 or Johnson 1987, the SEPARATION schema is given as the negation of the LINK schema by Krzeszowski 1997. The LINK

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schema consists of two or more entities connected either physically or metaphorically, along with a bond between them (Johnson 1987: 117-119). The SEPARATION schema involves two or more entities which either were, or could be, connected to form a LINK, but which are cut off from one another. It is related to the SPLITTING schema (cf. Johnson 1987: 43-44, Clausner and Croft 1999: 15) in that it also involves a negation of unity; the latter however is argued by Peña (2008: 1061) to be subservient to the PART-WHOLE schema "since for an entity to be split it must first have been understood as a whole consisting of some parts". For two entities to be separated, on the other hand, they do not have to have formerly constituted a whole, but can simply have been together in the same space, as illustrated by (1) below:

- (1) He then separated the red blocks from the blue and yellow ones, and built a red spaceship ([www.sentence-game.com](http://www.sentence-game.com)).

The annulation or dissolution of the link can be due to a FORCE which has pulled them apart, as in (2) below, or to a BARRIER which prevents them from coming together, as in (3) (cf. Talmy 1988 for these two image schemas):

- (2) These plugs often come connected together, but they can be separated by pulling them apart, or with cutting tools ([www.chow.com](http://www.chow.com)).  
 (3) Orthodox Jewish synagogues have separate men's and women's sections, typically separated by a wall or curtain called a mechtza ([www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)).

The FORCE schema corresponds to the operational sense of separation in which two entities in a LINK relation are sundered from one another; the BARRIER schema corresponds to the static sense, in which two entities which have been or could be in a LINK relation with one another are prevented from coming together by an obstacle keeping them apart. SEPARATION is thus a complex image schema built on the negation of a LINK by a FORCE or BARRIER. It is significant to note in this respect that the nouns *separation* and *séparation* can be used in both an operational (4-5) and a stative sense (6-7):

- (4) Sudanese twins born with the tops of their heads joined together have been separated in a rare and risky series of operations at a London children's hospital, officials said Sunday. Facing the World, a charity which helps disfigured children, said it had helped fund the four-stage operation on 11-month-olds Rital and Ritag Gaboura. (...) The charity said that the separation took place in stages at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital. Two operations took place in May. Tissue expanders – essentially balloons intended to help stretch the babies' skin over their newly exposed heads – were inserted in July. The final separation took place on Aug. 15 ([www.globalnews.ca](http://www.globalnews.ca)).

(5) La séparation a eu lieu dans un contexte compliqué. Nous étions à l'aube d'un déménagement important (à 3 heures de notre région) ([www.mamanpourelavie.com](http://www.mamanpourelavie.com)).

(6) What if... Nobody's Perfect? If we're all in a state of separation from God since the first sin of Adam & Eve, then we all are messed up and in need of redemption ([itunes.apple.com/ca](http://itunes.apple.com/ca)).

(7) Les conjoints en état de séparation involontaire doivent faire leur demande séparément comme des personnes célibataires ([argent.canoe.ca](http://argent.canoe.ca)).

The operation/state distinction will be seen to be relevant most particularly to the application of the SEPARATION schema to church-state relations.

Another analytical parameter that is pertinent to the investigation of the SEPARATION schema is the fact that the word *separation/séparation* itself is a nominalization based on the corresponding verb *to separate/se séparer*. Such nominalizations can be used to produce a number of rhetorical effects. Among these Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 182) include the capacity to "convey factual status", exemplified by the frequent use of this device by the French poet St-John Perse in order to create the impression of "affirmations that are, on account of their self-evidence or of his authority, undisputed". These authors conclude that noun phrases are devices for making a statement "timeless, and, in consequence, beyond the limits of subjectivity and bias". Ducrot (1984: 232) brings out a related aspect of nominalizations – the fact that they introduce a generic human enunciator into the discourse "qui est assimilé à une voix collective, à un ON [which is identified with a collective voice, a generic *one* or *they*]" –. The speaker can either include himself in this collectivity, as in *The improvement of the standard of living is closely associated with the rise in consumer goods*, or dissociate himself from it, as in *The improvement of the standard of living is a myth propagated by the government*. Hagège (1985: 269) also notes the shift from assertion to presupposition that accompanies nominalizations and allows the speaker to avoid responsibility for asserting what is said and preclude possible objections to it. Mendenhall (1990: 102) summarizes Hagège's insight as implying that

la nominalisation est un procédé, un des moyens dont dispose le locuteur pour rappeler ou résumer des informations déjà données ou supposées sans que ces informations soient mises ou remises en cause [nominalization is one of the devices at the speaker's disposal for recalling or summarizing already given or presupposed information without allowing this information to be called into question or challenged].

Referring to the use of nominalizations as an argumentative strategy in scientific discourse, Halliday and Martin (1993: 39) remark that this grammatical form allows authors to present assertions as indisputable and not open to negotiation

"since you can argue with a clause, but you can't argue with a nominal group". The author who offers the most complete characterization of the rhetorical effects of nominalizations is Fernandez Lagunilla (1999: 57-62). Besides the functions of shielding presupposed propositions from challenge and of introducing a collective voice and objective point of view, Fernandez Lagunilla observes that a nominalization such as *the dereglementation of the telecommunications sector* is ambiguous between an operational sense, in which it denotes a process currently under way, and a resultative sense in which it denotes the state ensuing upon this process. Another characteristic of deverbal nominalizations brought out by Fernandez Lagunilla is that they allow the speaker to leave unspecified all of the semantic and thematic roles associated with the corresponding verb. Thus while the indicative form *separates* calls for the specification of its third-person subject and situates the action of separating in present time, the noun *separation* carries no such requirements, and can be used in contexts where no reference is made at all to any specific subject (cf. *Separation is necessary*), as well as being compatible with any time (cf. *Separation was/is/will be a good thing*). In this respect, González Ruiz (2010: 129, 131) describes nominalizations as "reifying an action as an object [*«reificarlo» (al proceso) como un «objeto»*]", thereby producing the impression of "abstract neutrality [*abstracta neutralidad*]". This makes them a valuable device for encapsulating previously introduced information in a compact form which allows both the addition of the speaker's subjective evaluation of the situation, as when a state of affairs is referred to as a *problem* or *crisis*, and the subsequent introduction of new content related to the already given information by means of a predicate asserted of the nominalized subject.

## 2. The sociopolitical background for the texts

In the Canadian political context, the word *separation* is strongly associated with the province of Quebec. Historically, French-Canadian nationalism arose as a reaction to the British conquest of North America in 1759. The original settlers of New France were united by ties of religion (Roman Catholicism), ethnicity and language, and segregated from the British conquerors by barriers of religion, ethnic origin, language, political inclinations and practical exclusion from the commercial and financial sectors. This situation continued well into the twentieth century (cf. Henderson 2007), but in the 1950s and 60s Quebec, the only province in Canada with a majority of French speakers, underwent a major social change known as the "Révolution tranquille", which opened Quebec society onto the modern world, thereby diminishing the influence of the Catholic

Church and leading to a redefinition of French-Canadian nationalism in terms of language rather than religion or ethnicity (cf. Heller 2003, Oakes 2007). In order to protect and promote the French language, the Quebec provincial government has in recent times enacted a number of somewhat controversial language policies such as Bill 101 and the Charter of the French Language, which require immigrants to send their children to French schools and companies to use French in preference over other languages in public signage and internal operations. Linguistically speaking, Freake (2009) and Freake *et al.* (2011) have shown that, in present-day discourse within the province, Quebec is overwhelmingly construed as a *société/société* by both French- and English-speaking Quebecers. Furthermore, their research also demonstrates that the cluster *la nation québécoise* is a significantly frequent collocation in the corpus of briefs submitted to the Quebec Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, occurring 224 times in French, while the phrase *the Quebec nation* only occurs 8 times in English, of which 7 are disparaging of French speakers' pretensions to nationhood.

The view of Quebec as a society is however very much a characteristic peculiar to residents of the province, as the sequence *Quebec is a society* only corresponded to 19 Google hits overall on Canadian websites (search performed on December 20, 2012), 13 of which were from official Quebec government sites or speeches by Quebec Members of Parliament. The sequence *Ontario is a society*, on the other hand, was only found in one instance, and that was in a speech concerning an affordable housing act made by a member of Ontario's provincial legislative assembly in which the noun *society* was qualified by the relative clause *that is both compassionate and responsible*. The sequence *Quebec is a nation* occurred 204,000 times on English-Canadian websites. However, on the first page of results, 7 of the 10 contexts presented this proposition in a negative or controversial light. Even though Quebec represents only 22% of the overall population of Canada, *le Québec est une nation* obtained even more hits than the equivalent sequence in English –231,000– and all 10 hits on the first page of Google results presented this proposition in a positive light. It is not surprising therefore that Quebec has in recent history held two referendums on the question of its possible secession from the rest of Canada, in 1980 and 1995 respectively. Even today, one of the major political parties in the province, the Parti Québécois, defines itself on the home page of its official website as promoting “la souveraineté, le progrès social et la promotion du français au Québec” (pq.org, accessed on 19-09-11).

### 3. The use of the words *separation*, *sovereignty*, *independence* and their French equivalents in English and French Canadian discourse concerning Quebec

It is significant however that the Parti Québécois does not use the word *séparation* in its mission statement, but rather the noun *souveraineté*. There is a reason for this choice. A comparison of the first 100 hits on Google for *la séparation du Québec est* and *la souveraineté du Québec est* on .ca websites revealed 27% negative and only 11.5% positive predicates for *séparation*, as against 16% negative and 34% positive for *souveraineté*, the other attestations being either neutral or axiologically irrelevant. Another word frequently used to refer to this political issue is *indépendance*. A similar Google search for this word turned up 31% positive vs. only 6% negative evaluations. On the English side of things, the weightings are analogous but somewhat different: *separation* –26.7% negative vs. only 3.3% positive; *sovereignty*– 11.1 % negative vs. 22.2% positive; *independence* –10% negative and 10% positive. The verbal equivalents of these nouns show the same kind of tendencies with one exception, as illustrated in the table below.

	Negative	Positive
la séparation du Québec est	27%	11.5%
the separation of Québec is	26.7%	3.3%
si le Québec se sépare	49%	10%
if Quebec separates	56%	7%
si le Québec devient souverain	19%	32.4%
if Quebec becomes sovereign	7.7%	38.5%
si le Québec devient indépendant	26.5%	12%
if Quebec becomes independent	48.7%	7%

The exception is the pair of adjectives *indépendant* and *independent*, which both evoke more negative than positive reactions, although not as much negativity as *se sépare* and *separates*. This is a reversal of the positivity associated with the noun *indépendance* in French and a turning in favour of negativity of the 50/50 balance observed with *independence* in English. This phenomenon would seem

to be a product of the grammatical form in which these notions are framed: nominalizations such as *independence* presuppose the existence of their referent and treat it as given information, whereas the conditional clause with the verb phrase *becomes independent* represents the occurrence of Quebec's independence as an action carried out by Quebec at some point in the future, and sets the stage for imagining the possible consequences of the occurrence of this event. This makes the action more concrete and triggers stronger negative reactions, especially among English Canadians. Another factor that plays a role in the greater negativity associated with *se sépare* and *separates* is the possibility of construing this verb with a prepositional phrase introduced by *de* or *from* indicating the entity from which the separating entity sunders itself. In contexts involving such prepositional phrases, the following distribution was found in the first 100 hits of the sequences shown below, with the remaining uses being either neutral or irrelevant:

	Negative	Positive
si le Québec se sépare du Canada	40%	0%
if Quebec separates from Canada	68%	11%

The specification of the co-participant in the LINK schema from which Quebec is said to separate thus correlates with a higher level of negativity in English-Canadian discourse, whereas in French the negative vs positive differential remains practically the same (39% vs 40%), although it is noteworthy that there were no cases even in the French data in which a positive view was taken of separation when Canada was mentioned as the partner from whom Quebec might dissociate itself. This is likely the manifestation of a strategy of mitigation, as it is clear from the data above that the more concrete and specific the action of separation is made, by anchoring it to a subject, a place in time, and a *terminus a quo*, the more negativity is associated with the notion of separation, especially in English-Canadian texts.

In general then, it is quite clear from the data just discussed that there is a heavy dose of negativity associated with the nouns *séparation/separation* and the verbs *se sépare/separates* in the Canadian political context, as compared to other expressions referring to the same reality such as *independance/independence* and *sovereignty/souveraineté*. We will now explore the reasons for these negative associations, showing how they are derived from the image schema of SEPARATION.

As described above, the SEPARATION schema involves four basic interrelated elements: NEGATION, LINK, FORCE and BARRIER. NEGATION applies to the LINK, with the bond between the actually or potentially linked entities being either broken by a FORCE pulling the latter apart or prevented from being established by a BARRIER keeping them from coming together. The obvious source of the large number of negative contexts observed above, with the English-Canadian *if Quebec separates from Canada* leading the parade at 68% negativity, is the presence of the notion of NEGATION in the SEPARATION schema. The concept of sovereignty, in contrast, does not involve a negative image schema, being associated rather with the positive notion of having full political control over one's affairs<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to note that even in non-political contexts there are a number of cases in which the fact that two entities are separate or separated prevents some potentially desirable action from being performed, as in (8) and (9) below:

(8) However the biggest complaint I get from users about usability is: the images get missed because they are separate from the posts ([www.wend.ca](http://www.wend.ca)).

(9) Only about half of the mothers of sick children are able to produce an adequate milk supply [i.e. half are unable to], either because they are sick themselves or because they are separated from their baby ([www.ctv.ca](http://www.ctv.ca)).

The involvement of the BARRIER schema in the cognitive model of SEPARATION directs this negativity towards various relations which imply or presuppose a bond between the two separated entities. In the English *if Quebec separates* contexts, reference is made to Quebecers not being allowed to move freely across Canada, to Quebec becoming an isolated country, to Quebec no longer receiving any money from the rest of Canada and to the potential disruption of trade flows. The presence of the FORCE schema also makes itself felt: in 6.6% of the political contexts there is a reference to some form of conflict or violence associated with the separation of Quebec. The majority of these evoke the possibility of war between Quebec and Canada; the rest refer to the fear of possible oppression of minority ethnic groups inside Quebec or the creation of a confrontational attitude towards English Canadians visiting the new independent country.

#### 4. Separation in the marital domain

The negativity of the notion of separation is confirmed even more strongly in the second domain examined in this study – contexts making reference to couples

<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines *sovereignty* as “the absolute and independent authority of a community, nation, etc.; the right to autonomy or self-government”.

who were married or living together. An examination of the first 100 hits of *are separated but* showed 62 having to do with the negation of the LINK schema: 50 concerning the dissolution of the legal or financial bond between spouses, and 12 the annulment of the sexual or emotional tie to the other spouse. The BARRIER schema was also present, with 18 references to the expectation that separated couples no longer cohabit or live under the same roof. There were only two references to hostility or violence, and a new element with respect to the political contexts occurred in 4 contexts, having to do with an expectation of solitude after a separation, obviously due to the fact that in the conjugal domain the separated entities are former spouses and not political entities. The French-Canadian data for *sont séparé(e)s mais* gave similar results, but with some additional dimensions. Only 9 of the 100 hits concerned the dissolution of the legal bond between spouses. This may have to do with the fact that as of 2006 common-law couples represented 34.6% of couples in Quebec as compared to only 13.4% in English Canada (cf. Milan *et al.* 2007). The annulment of the sexual or emotional tie to the other spouse was referred to in only 6 cases (50% less than in English Canada). Again this is perhaps due to a lower degree of commitment in Quebec couples as reflected in the lower marriage statistics: over 60% of common-law unions break up, as compared to only 33% of first marriages (cf. The Canadian Encyclopedia on-line; Lambert 2009: 6). In addition, marriages themselves are less stable in Quebec, with a 48.4% divorce rate for married couples as compared to only 32.2% in the rest of Canada (cf. Lambert 2009: 5). These sociological facts correlate even more strikingly with the results of searches for the sequences *separated from his/her wife/husband* vs *s'est séparé(e) de sa/son femme/mari*, a summary of which is given below.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
separated from his/her wife/husband	64%	27%	3%
s'est séparé(e) de sa/son femme/mari	33%	67%	0%

The linguistic data here mirrors the greater frequency and social normalization of conjugal separation in French-speaking Canada compared to the English-speaking part of the country. Another factor particular to French-Canadian contexts is the reference in 13 cases to the spouses still remaining friends or being on good terms after separation, which suggests a certain blurring of the boundary between friendship and conjugality. There are also 9 French contexts where allusion is made to the negative impact of separation on the children, which correlates with the fact that the breakup of couples tends to occur earlier in the Quebec social context –the average age at divorce is 32 years for men and

30 for women in Quebec, as compared to 44 years for men and 41.4 for women in the national Canadian statistics (Lambert 2009: 9). In only one case in the French-Canadian data was the solitude of the former spouses evoked, and there were no direct references to violence or hostility, although this notion was present covertly in contexts evoking the fact that the separated spouses nevertheless were still friends, still spoke to one another, had no bad feelings, etc., which imply another voice representing the possibility that they might not continue to be friends, speak to one another or harbour good feelings towards one another.

The searches for *are separate but, sont séparé(e)s mais, because they are separate(d)* and *parce qu'ils/elles sont séparé(e)s* also turned up a number of non-marital contexts which allowed the implications of the SEPARATION schema to be explored in a more general way. The first 100 hits of the sequence *are separate but* contained no marital contexts at all (as opposed to all of the contexts for *are separated but* being marital). However in 73 of the 100 occurrences, NEGATION OF LINK was attested, in that the two separate entities were presented as not related, connected, affiliated, united, mixed, complementary, interdependent, identical, similar, equal or cooperating with one another. In 5 cases, the BARRIER schema was evoked: there were 4 cases of denial of overlap and one of denial of blurriness of boundaries. The sequence *because they are separate* produced similar results with some additional particularities. Besides the negation of connection or relation, the following other aspects were found: no sharing between separate entities (11.6%), no communication between separate entities (7%), no access from one entity to another (7%), impossibility of doing something to all of the separate entities because they are not together (4.6%). It is noteworthy that all 43 of the occurrences of this sequence involved negative consequences. In the 44 occurrences of the closely related *because they are separated*-sequence, only one positive consequence was found, which is given in (10):

- (10) Programs like the "STEP" program in Manitoba can serve ghettoized SWD [social welfare department beneficiaries], because they are separated from other students ([www.neads.ca](http://www.neads.ca)).

Here the fact of being set off from the other students is an advantage with regard to the STEP programme's ability to serve people who have already been socially ghettoized and who would probably feel ill at ease if mixed with other people. Normally, however, being separated is not something positive. Rather it prevents interdependence, connection, communication or accessibility, and creates differences. In 25% of the occurrences, it prevents something from being done, as in (9) above, or causes some negative consequence, as in (11) below:

- (11) This is a distinctly vulnerable category of children because they are separated from their parents and families ([www.parl.gouv.ca](http://www.parl.gouv.ca)).

On the French-Canadian side, the sequences *parce qu'ils/elles sont séparé(e)s* yielded 22.2% references to the negative consequences of separation, 16.7% to alienation or impossibility of communication, 11.1% to entities not being added or kept together, and 5.5% to absence of contact. The non-marital contexts for *sont séparé(e)s mais* showed 25% negation of being together, 16.7% negation of having something in common, 16.7% negation of coordination and 12.5% negation of being united, along with references to absence of correlation, harmony, equilibrium, sameness, simultaneity and accessibility. Even outside of political and marital contexts, therefore, the image schema of SEPARATION is seen to carry a heavy load of negativity. It will now be shown that this is also the case in its application to church-state relations.

## 5. The separation of church and state

A first point which emerged from the data in this domain is that the SEPARATION schema is clearly the prototype for the conceptualization of church-state relations. A Webcorp search for the collocates of the expression *church and state* on .ca websites on March 25, 2011 yielded *separation* as the number one collocate by a wide margin, with 58 of the 122 occurrences on the list of the top 20 collocates, the next most frequent item being the noun *reply*, with 11 occurrences. A similar search for the collocates of the French phrase *l'Église et l'État* only yielded one item, but this was the noun *séparation*. Since Webcorp makes a random selection of only a certain number of web pages, in order to complete the picture, a Google search of the first 100 hits on .ca sites of *de l'Église et de l'État* was performed. This yielded 89 cases in which this phrase was immediately preceded by the noun *séparation*; the parallel English search turned up 90 occurrences of *separation* preceding the phrase *of church and state* in the equivalent linguistic context.

All of the attestations of this phrase, in both English and French, exhibited moreover the stative rather than the operational sense of separation. This depicts the situation of church and state being separated as a sort of *fait accompli*—a fact about the way things are—abstracting away from what agent it was who carried out the separating, when the separation took place, the reasons that motivated it, etc. In actual fact, diachronically the first attestations of the phrase are in 1830 for both French and English (cf. Google Ngram Viewer and *Trésor de la langue française*), making it a relatively modern concept, both post-Enlightenment and post-French Revolution. In subsequent history, the year 1905 was a significant landmark in the evolution of the political concept of separation of church and state: on December 9<sup>th</sup> of that year the French Chamber of Deputies passed the Law of Separation, which dissolved most of the religious congregations in

France, expropriated all church buildings and the works of art kept therein, and forbade the displaying of religious symbols on public buildings. The current debate over the wearing of the Islamic veil carries the echo of this law, which is still in effect in France today, into the present moment.

In order to explore the context beyond the noun immediately preceding the prepositions *of* and *de*, the first 100 hits of the phrases *church and state* and *l'Église et l'État* were also examined to see if any traces of the prototypical application of the SEPARATION schema to church-state relations were discernible. In English, besides the 47 cases where *separation* was found to be a collocate, there were a number of references to problems (3), clash (1), conflict (1) and boundaries (1). Only two contexts evoked a positive relationship or union between church and state. The French-Canadian websites showed fewer references to separation (28), but had more collocates than the English-Canadian ones which made mention of conflict or confrontation (10), divorce or dissociation (10) and boundaries (2). Only two cases of a positive type of relation were found (alliance and collaboration). This suggests a stronger aversion to the presence of the church on the political scene in French Canada, which would correspond to the received version of the history of Quebec in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which turns upon the pivotal period of the Quiet Revolution, in which Quebecers cast off the bonds of Catholicism and subservience to Anglophone economic domination to become a modern secular society (cf. Létourneau 1997). In any case, the collocational data indicates the underlying presence of the SEPARATION schema in the way that both English and French-speaking Canadians conceive of church-state relations. Both the FORCE schema and the BARRIER schema are also well-represented in the discourse of both linguistic communities concerning this topic. As mentioned above, the conflictual impressions associated with the FORCE schema are more frequent in the French texts. The same is also true of NEGATION OF LINK.

Another interesting dimension of the SEPARATION schema's application to church-state relations is that the nouns *separation* and *séparation* are practically always used in the stative sense when referring to this relationship. This is almost universally the case in the phrases *the separation of church and state* and *la séparation de l'Église et de l'État*, which constitute the majority of the uses of these two nouns. Only three cases of the phrase *the separation of church and state* occurred in the operational sense, and only two of the equivalent French phrase were found, as in (12) and (13):

- (12) The separation of church and state occurred centuries ago for a very good reason ([www.brantfordexpositor.ca](http://www.brantfordexpositor.ca)).

- (13) Qui peut oublier que la séparation de l'Église et de l'État s'est faite dans la douleur. Et sommes-nous obligés de continuer cette guerre qui n'a plus lieu d'être? (ojs.library.ubc.ca).

Similarly, the great majority of the sequences containing the verb *separates/sépare* with the noun phrase *church and state/l'Église et l'état* as its direct object were stative as well:

- (14) Some have criticized the proposal to create the Office of Religious Freedom as a blurring of the time-honoured line that separates church and state (www.cbc.ca).  
 (15) Le 28 décembre 2009, il disait que les Américains devraient abolir la barrière qui sépare l'Église et l'État (martineau.blogue.canoe.ca).

This indicates that in the popular conceptualization of church-state relations, church and state are construed as existing in a state of dissociation from one another, each occupying its own sphere, with a BARRIER between them, and not as operatively going from an initial state of being bound together by a LINK to a subsequent state of dissociation due to the intervention of a FORCE. Thus while a web search turned up 14,500 cases of *if the couple breaks up* and 380 of *if Canada and Quebec break up*, no results at all were found for *if church and state break up* and only one of *if church and state separate*, which involved a comparison with a marital dissolution:

- (16) if church and state separate then the church can sue for alimony; if it loses, it will have to go out and get a real job (www.topix.com).

On the French side, 8,190 occurrences of *si le Québec se sépare* were found, as against no occurrences at all of the phrase *si l'Église et l'État se séparent*.

The default stative interpretation of separation as it applies to church-state relations reinforces the presupposed character of the content of this nominalization, and has as a consequence the complete absence of any need to provide arguments to justify the separation of church and state. In English only .002 % of the contexts involving the sequence *church and state must/should be kept separate* were followed by a clause introduced by *because* or *since* giving a motivation for the separation; in French, alongside the 1,960 occurrences of *l'Église et l'état doivent être séparés* none at all were found in which this main clause was followed by a subordinate clause introduced by *parce que* or *puisque*, and only one case of *c'est pourquoi l'Église et l'état sont séparés* was discovered. In contrast, in 399 of the 5,540 cases of *le Québec devrait se séparer* reasons were provided to support the need for separation, and in 259 of the 51,500 occurrences of the sequence *le couple s'est séparé* reference was made to motivations for the break-up. The way the schema of SEPARATION is construed thus has an impact on the forms of argumentation involving the notion of separation found in the domain of church-state relations, where the state of dissociation of

the two entities in question is taken as given and need not be justified, as compared to the relation between Quebec and Canada and that between partners in a couple. The given status of the state of dissociation between church and state manifests itself furthermore in the fact that the separation of church and state itself functions very frequently as a reason calling for certain behaviours which are based upon this principle: thus the sequence *because of the separation of church and state* occurs 1,660,000 times on the whole internet; *à cause de la séparation de l'Église et de l'état* turned up 69,000 results.

## 6. Conclusions

To conclude with some more general observations concerning the limits of image schemas as instruments of thought, it may be interesting to reflect upon the adequacy of the SEPARATION schema for the conceptualization of the three realities which have been discussed in this study. It is well-known that cognitive models such as image schemas and metaphors only bring out certain aspects of the realities they are used to depict, and in some cases introduce considerable conceptual distortion. Reddy (1979: 299) goes so far as to tax the CONDUIT metaphor applied to linguistic communication in expressions such as *to get one's meaning across clearly* as a case of "semantic pathology" which has handicapped information theory, caused confusion in the field of aesthetics and literary criticism, and contributed to encouraging reader passivity. He points out that ideas are not objects that are loaded by speakers into signs acting as containers and then sent over to the hearer, who has merely to unload the meaning from the sign, but rather concepts which have to be called to mind by the addressee and interpreted in context, i.e. which require active processing. The conduit metaphor thus corresponds quite adequately to the reality of the transmission of sound, but not to that of the conveying of sense. If we examine the applicability of the SEPARATION schema to the political question of the secession of Quebec from Canada, NEGATION OF LINK certainly seems applicable, along with the establishment of some sort of BARRIER between Quebec and the rest of the country. How much this barrier would prevent communication, trade and travel is debatable however, as well as whether force would be required to effect the separation of the province from the Canadian federal state.

Regarding the marital contexts, NEGATION OF LINK seems an apt description of the separation of a couple, although the data suggests that this factor has lesser importance in the French-Canadian social context. The BARRIER sub-schema also corresponds accurately to the fact that separated couples no longer live together. However, it was observed that the French texts showed a lesser presence of this element in relations between former spouses. The application of

the FORCE schema to the dissolution of a couple is justified by the bad feelings, tensions and conflict that generally precede and accompany this type of break-up.

As regards church-state relations, the adequacy of the SEPARATION schema for the proper conceptualization of this reality appears more problematic. NEGATION OF LINK does indeed seem applicable to these relations, in the sense that church and state are different institutions with different goals. If however one follows the definition of the goal of the state as the pursuit of the temporal common good and that of the church as the pursuit of the spiritual common good (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, no. 404), it is obvious that while the two institutions are not one and the same thing, they do share both the notion of "common" and that of "good". Moreover, while the notions of "spiritual" and "temporal" are not the same, it is not necessarily the case that they must be opposed to one another. Indeed, in the Christian worldview, they are closely interrelated since they both, "although by different means, serve the personal and social welfare of the same human beings" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, no. 425). Moreover, in any temporal State, a large number—in most cases, the majority—of the citizens of the State are also members of some religious denomination. To apply the image schema of SEPARATION to these citizens is to require that they live a sort of double life in which there is no relation between their religious and temporal-political values. It is far from clear moreover that just because something is good from the spiritual point of view, it is necessarily bad from the temporal viewpoint, or, on the contrary, that because it is a temporal good it is a spiritual evil. One sees here the limitations of image schemas, whose application is based on a certain analogy with the reality that they are used to conceptualize. As with the CONDUIT schema used to describe human communication, the SEPARATION schema used to depict church-state relations has certain points of correspondence with the reality that it refers to (the existence of a distinction between the temporal and spiritual orders), but it can also lead one astray as to the true nature of the reality referred to as regards other dimensions not depicted by the partial characterization provided by the image schema. In the case of the CONDUIT image applied to communication, one might get the false impression that the linguistic sign contains its meaning like an airplane contains its cargo. In the case of the SEPARATION schema applied to church-state relations, one might get the impression that church and state have nothing at all in common and that there is no interaction, communication or harmony possible between them. It is perhaps unfortunate that the notion of parallel correlation expressed by the phrase "give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's" should be construed stereotypically in current-day Canadian discourse in

terms of the image schema of SEPARATION. There is much that gets lost in translation in this form of conceptualization.

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