"Our Cherished Political System":
Secularism and the Muslim Brotherhood through the Lens of Canadian Media

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Abstract: The resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February, 2011 in the face of massive political protests and demonstrations prompted a flurry of media attention in Canada. Popular media outlets were rife with speculation regarding the political future of Egypt's foremost Islamist party, the Muslim Brotherhood. This article reports findings of an analysis of three news articles published in each of Canada's two leading national English-language newspapers, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, in February 2011, using the key terms "Muslim Brotherhood" and "Egyptian Revolution." This analysis revealed a deep ambivalence regarding the place of secularism within democracy. In order to promote their respective ideological agendas of "open" and "closed" secularism respectively, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* suppressed the historical and political complexities that facilitated the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood and differentiate it from other Islamist parties. This article highlights those complexities by examining the socio-political context that gave birth to the Muslim Brotherhood, the ways in which the Brotherhood differs from other Islamist parties, its response to autocratic control, and its relationship to democracy. In doing so, this investigation underscores the foundations of Canada's ambivalence toward secularism at home and abroad.

Key Terms: Canadian news media, Islamism, Egyptian Revolution, secularism, Muslim Brotherhood, liberal democracy, Israel

Introduction

The opening months of 2011 saw dramatic developments in the Middle East. Although opinions vary over the impetus for these events, it is clear that a wave of protests against authoritarian regimes has swept through North Africa and the Gulf, and change at political and social levels is inevitable. These events have been the topic of much debate in the Canadian media. The roles of Islamic religious groups have been under special scrutiny during the course of these protests. The popular uprising in Egypt has received the most media attention, due to the size, speed, and impact of the revolution. At the same time, many journalists have expressed concern that the "victory" of the liberal democratic protesters could be undermined by political interference by the Muslim Brotherhood. After reviewing the coverage given to the Egyptian revolution by the mainstream Canadian media, in conjunction with the analyses offered at various academic

forums and events, I observe that an underlying fear that the Muslim Brotherhood will stifle any fledgling democratic movement in Egypt is quite pervasive. I would argue that such concerns are founded on an assumption that Islam as a religion is antithetical to democracy, which has resulted from a Western ideal that constructs democracy as necessarily secular.

Mass media, including national news organizations, perpetuate ideological agendas, and their dissemination of global and national news is filtered through an ideological lens (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). In this article, I investigate how Canada's two national English-language newspapers—the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*—have depicted the Muslim Brotherhood and its place in Egyptian politics, what values of democracy and secularism these depictions represent, and whether these values have any theoretical or practical basis in Egypt. My research concludes that the *National Post* and, to a lesser degree, the *Globe and Mail* gloss over the complexities that differentiate the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood from other Islamist parties in a way that is misleading and may be seen as instrumental in promotion of their respective ideological agendas of "closed" and "open" secularism.

Methodology

The findings presented here are based on a content analysis of three articles published in February 2011 in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, respectively. Articles were retrieved from the news organizations' homepages, using the keywords "Muslim Brotherhood" and "Egyptian Revolution," with the additional criteria that all articles be of a comparable length (roughly one thousand words). In total, six articles were analyzed for statements linking the Muslim Brotherhood with current and prospective political developments in Egypt and the following key words: terrorism, democracy, secular, and Israel. These criteria were selected in order to identify what assumptions were implicit in news reporting of this topic, regardless of journalistic claims of objectivity and fact-based reporting. Through the analysis of the content of six ostensibly "fact-based" articles, basic claims regarding the relationship between secularism and democracy became apparent, as did a systemic misrepresentation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

The Egyptian Revolution through the Lens of Canadian Print Media

Debates about the proper place of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's future are generally divided into two camps: those that support the Muslim Brotherhood as a valid political party with a right to participate in elections, and those that are opposed to it. The *Globe and Mail*— Canada's longest running and most widely read national newspaper (*Encylopedia Britannica*, 2011)—is firmly located in the first camp. The *Globe and Mail*'s staff columnist Jeffrey Simpson wrote an article on February 11, 2011 addressing "fears [within the Harper government] that democracy will unleash Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, with some of its extremist Islam" (Simpson, 2011). In the article, Simpson challenges these fears, conceding that the Brotherhood

"will play a role in what unfolds in Egypt" but will not be "taking over, like some kind of Egyptian Bolsheviks" (Simpson, 2011). A subsequent article by Patrick Martin, the *Globe and Mail*'s Middle East correspondent, offers an in-depth analysis on the role Islamists will likely play in some post-Revolution Middle Eastern states, including Egypt. Martin (2001) asserts that Egypt is "not going to be some Western-style democracy" and notes that "in countries where Islamic movements have been allowed to run for office, the process tends to moderate them" (Martin, 2011). Not only do Martin and Simpson refuse to explicitly extol the virtues of Canadian democracy, but both suggest that Egypt look to Turkey for inspiration, with its "blend of moderate Islam and democracy [that] has brought political stability and economic recovery" (Simpson, 2011).

The *National Post*, Canada's other national English-language newspaper, takes a very dim view of the Muslim Brotherhood. Content analysis of three articles from the *National Post* revealed vehement opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists in general, whom the paper repeatedly equates with "jihadists" (Jonas, 2011; Goodspeed, 2011), often using the terms interchangeably. The *Post*'s foreign affairs correspondent Peter Goodspeed's article, "What comes after the Revolution," validates "fear [that] Islamist movements may emerge at the head of the current revolts or at least lie waiting in ambush to seize power" (Goodspeed, 2011). With such hostile diction, including words such as "ambush" and "seize power," Goodspeed overtly rejects the notion that the Muslim Brotherhood can or should garner legitimate authority in a democratic election. Goodspeed's fellow contributor George Jonas goes further with such article titles as "Opening a backdoor to theocracy" and "Goodbye Hosni, Hello Hamas!" Jonas (2001) begins his article, headlined "Opening a backdoor to theocracy," by condemning U.S. President Barack Obama for allowing the Egyptians to determine their own fate through popular protests and goes on to chastise the President for encouraging Mubarak to acquiesce to the demands of the Egyptian people. Jonas argues that "Obama didn't explain why such abdication wouldn't risk handing Egypt to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood on a platter" (Jonas, 2011)—an outcome Jonas clearly deems to be a downgrade from the dictatorial control exercised by Mubarak.

Jonas, like many other journalists and commentators, erroneously depicts the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as "Islamist militants, forerunners of Hamas and Hezbollah, kissing cousins of Gama Islamiyya" (Jonas, 2011). A similar conflation of Islamist groups was inadvertently made in Patrick Martin's article for the *Globe and Mail*, which predicts "how the Arab Spring will reshape the Middle East." The article gives a uniform treatment to the various Islamist parties in states across the entire Middle East, as if the situation in these heterogeneous societies could be characterized in singular terms. One does not need to be versed in Islamic history to recognize that there is a plurality of beliefs within Islam; similarly, there is a plurality of Islamisms (Zahid, 2010).

History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

To set the context for the following discussion, I will give a brief overview of the history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which will hopefully make clear its relation (or lack thereof) to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Islamic political movements, some but not all of which are understood in the West as terrorist groups. In 1928, a young schoolteacher named Hassan Al-Banna founded the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Al-Banna was raised a Sufi in British-occupied Egypt. Although Egypt achieved nominal sovereignty in 1922, Al-Banna remained frustrated with the continuing inequality between the Egyptian people and foreign employees of colonial companies that still controlled much of the economy. Thus, in 1928 Al-Banna established a nationalist movement that "fuse[d] religious revival with anti-imperialism" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 108). He propagated his movement through existing social networks, notably around mosques and Islamic welfare associations (Zahid, 2010). The movement became increasingly popular, which prompted the government to dissolve the Brotherhood in 1948. When the Muslim Brothers were falsely implicated in the murder of the Prime Minister later that year, Hassan al-Banna was assassinated.

The death of Al-Banna triggered strife and fragmentation within the movement, with certain factions turning toward violence—a practice Al-Banna explicitly condemned. It was during this period that Sayyid Qutb emerged as the Brotherhood's most influential theorist. Qutb famously condemned those Muslims who turned their back on the Brotherhood after attaining power. This criticism was directed specifically at Gamel Abdel Nasser, leader of the Free Officers Movement, who had allied himself with the Muslim Brotherhood and then turned his back on the party as soon as he took control of the country in 1952. Nasser's betrayal enraged Qutb, who embarked on a new path known as "vanguard Islamism." This branch of Islamism— which provided inspiration for such noted terrorists as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri—is often mistakenly conflated with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb advocated *jihad* against both the non-believer and the *kafireen* ("apostate"), as the means to achieve a universal Islamic polity. The new official leader of the Muslim Brothers, Hasan al-Hudaybi, rejected Qutb's violent factions, and his attitude of tolerance prevailed within the organization, thereby "cementing the group's moderate vocation" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 110). This has not stopped many Western critics from confusing the Muslim Brotherhood with its offshoot organizations, especially many political parties or terrorist organizations that derive their ideology from Sayyid Qutb, including Al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. Such confusion ignores fundamental differences between organizations—not only their divergent attitudes toward violence, but also their radically opposed views on democracy. The Muslim Brotherhood has "repeatedly justified democracy on Islamic grounds" and "finds democracy compatible with its notion of slow Islamization" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 110). Meanwhile, Qutb's vanguard Islamism is vehemently opposed to democracy, which is why many of his followers, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, condemn the Muslim Brotherhood for

"luring thousands of young Muslim men into lines for elections… instead of into the lines of *jihad*" (as cited in Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 107).

Challenging a Universal Representation of Islamism

By tracing the thread of Islamism through the evolution and fragmentation of the Muslim Brotherhood, it has hopefully become clear that the term "Islamism" is one of contention and is used to refer to a diversity of often conflicting movements. Consequently, invoking the term almost invariably excites controversy. Its definition varies both between Muslims and non-Muslims and among Islamist groups. It is variously understood as a political movement, a statement of identity politics, or simply an expression of religious belief. Among scholars, "Islamism" is often understood to be the political branch of Salafism (Hegghammer, 2009). This equation further complicates the issue, as understandings of Salafism vary within the Muslim world. Very loosely, the label *salafi* denotes a "school of thought that takes the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*) of the patristic period of early Islam as exemplary models" (Moosa, 2005, p. 21). Its retrospective idealism is often confused with fundamentalism. In fact, the name *salafi* is sometimes used as a blanket term to refer to followers of "Wahhabism,"a particular brand of Salafism propagated by Muhammed bin 'Abd Al-Wahhab, an 18th century Islamic scholar. This is problematic because the Muslim Brotherhood is also frequently identified as *salafi*, and yet the Brotherhood's political ideology is vastly distinct from Wahhabism. Wahhabis reject what they call "*da'wa hizbiyya,* literally the call to participate in local politics" (Hasan, 2009, p. 171) on Salafi ideological grounds, claiming that it encourages undue innovation amongst political leaders and fanatical loyalty to a non-faith based organization among group members. This is the brand of Salafism popularized (and financed) by the House of Saud. The Muslim Brotherhood eschews the Wahhabist stance on politics, instead insisting that Islam is, by nature, political. There is little love lost between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Saudi religious establishment, which rejects the Brotherhood's participation in politics, calling them the "Bankrupt Brotherhood" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 112).

Some members of the Muslim Brotherhood fear an association with Wahhabism and reject the identification with Salafism altogether, but a significant portion identify as Enlightened *Salafis*, members of a renaissance school of Islam founded by modernist scholars Jamal ad-din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh (Haykel, 2009). Al-Afghani and Abduh were two early 20th century reformers who had a profound influence on Hassan Al-Banna. Unlike Al-Wahhab, who advocated a literalist approach to the Qur'an and hadith, Abduh argued that early generations of Muslims had produced a successful cosmopolitan civilization because they were unafraid to creatively interpret the Qur'an in order to answer pressing social and political needs. Abduh suggested that the Qur'an and the hadith could be reinterpreted to allow for a fusion between anti-colonial Egyptian nationalist movements and orthodox Islam. His work provided the blueprint for Al-Banna, who advocated "resistance to foreign domination through

the exaltation of Islam" (Leiken & Brooke, p. 108). While the party has evolved since its nascent-days' quest to oust the British colonial powers, its ongoing commitment to Egyptian sovereignty and political reform was evident in the party's active participation in the recent Egyptian Revolution.

Given the frequency with which Islamist groups differ over ideological identification, it is unsurprising that Western discourse on the subject is riddled with misunderstandings and misrepresentations. Depictions of the Muslim Brotherhood in the media are further complicated by the globalization of the movement. The principles of what began as an Egyptian nationalist movement have spread throughout the Muslim world, each faction claiming to have its roots in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. But it would be a mistake to perceive all groups that call themselves or associate with the Muslim Brotherhood as a "monolith"; rather, it is "a collection of national groups with differing outlooks" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 108). To conflate the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood with its spin-off organizations, such as Hamas, or unrelated organizations such as Hezbollah, is not only illogical but has "thwarted strategic thinking" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 112), by propagating a caricature in Western discourse of Islam as a religion that breeds violence and eschews democratic practices.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy

The question of the compatibility of Islam with democracy is the nexus around which the media has discussed the Muslim Brotherhood's role in the Egyptian Revolution. In doing so, many journalists have found scholars or specialists to lend academic authority to pro- or anti-Islamist bias, including most of the journalists surveyed for this paper. The *Globe and Mail*'s Patrick Martin sought the input of Alastair Crooke, the director of Beirut's Conflict Forum and author of *Resistance: Essence of Islamist Revolution*. Crooke cites the Brotherhood's recent establishment of more moderate adjunct parties as evidence of "a new kind of openness" (as cited in Martin, 2011) that will allow the Brotherhood's message to resonate with a wider demographic in the electoral process. In contrast, the *National Post* offers a very different picture, contrasting Olivier Roy, a professor at the European University Institute, to give credit to the assertion that this is a "post-Islamist generation" (as cited in Goodspeed, 2011) that will embark on a Western secular path to democracy.

The feasibility of an Islamic democracy has been the subject of much debate in Western scholarship. Arguments hinge on the premise that secularism is a necessary precondition for democracy, and this is certainly the assumption at work in all three of the *National Post* articles surveyed. A correlation between secularism and democracy was famously posited in 1651 with the publication of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes attempts to resolve the tension between obeying the will of God and the rule of law (Hashemi, 2009). In subsequent years, this tension received attention by numerous philosophers and politicians and eventually resulted in the 1791 "Establishment Clause," the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution establishing the so-

called "wall of separation" between church and state. For better or worse, the U.S. has become the barometer by which measurements of liberal democracy are set.

Bernard Lewis—perhaps the most vocal critic of the concept of Islamic democracy— argues that secularization is unlikely in the Muslim world because in Islam, unlike Christianity, there is "no moral basis or historical precedent for the separation of politics and religion" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 19). I would argue that Lewis' theory is based on two questionable assumptions. First, Lewis argues that Christendom has nurtured a separation between church and state. Such a retrospective analysis fails to account for the "mutual interdependence and sometimes union of church and state, not only in…Eastern Orthodox Christianity but in Latin Christendom as well" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 19). The second assumption Lewis makes is more problematic: he proposes a parallel between the past and the future by arguing that, since Islamic societies were never secular in the past, they could never be secular in the future. This deterministic view of history fails to account for unprecedented events that bring change, such as the 17th century's European wars of religion, which prompted political theorists to "find a stable basis of legitimacy beyond confessional differences" (Taylor, 2007, p. 214).

"Open" and "Closed" Secularism

I would suggest that the more pertinent question to be asking is not whether Islamic societies *could* mirror the Western model of secularism, but whether they *need* to. Western scholars and figures in popular media who argue that democracy will flounder in the Middle East because of undue religious influence by parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood are rooting their arguments in an illusion of secularism that, arguably, does not really exist. Secularism in Canada has been, in reality, a recent experiment, and already the "assumptions [Lewis] makes of an enduring dualism between church and state in the West" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 19) is beginning to fade as the "closed" secularism of the 1960's-1970's gives way under pressure to a more "open" secularism—one which allows for the inclusion of religion in the public sphere. Canadian secularism, which began as a project to encourage multiculturalism and solve Canada's overt Christian privilege, was soon revealed to be "the legacy of a shadow establishment" (Bramadat & Seljak, 2011, p. 7), a veiled extension of Christian influence. Canada, like other Western states including France, Germany, and Great Britain, has now entered an "ideological interregnum period" (Bramadat & Seljak, 2011, p. 13), as it tries to determine a new method for handling religious diversity. Unfortunately, many journalists have not yet recognized the emergent flaws of secularism, and in reporting on the Egyptian Revolution, they lament what they perceive to be the Muslim Brotherhood's intention to corrupt "our cherished political system" of secularism (Jonas, 2011).

Beyond the flaws inherent in current conceptualizations of Western secularism, there are other challenges to secularization in Egypt. The first barrier, and the one that has received the most scholarly attention, is the negative association with secularism in the Muslim world

(Hashemi, 2009; Mcdonald, 2008). Historically, in Western societies, secularism has been associated with pluralism and religious diversity. However, throughout the Muslim world, from Indonesia to Iraq, "secularism has been associated with repressive regimes, failed development strategies, and foreign intervention" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 169). A Pew Research Centre "Global Attitude Project" reported in 2010 that 95% of surveyed Egyptian Muslims want Islam to play a large role in politics, with 80% saying that the role it plays at present is insufficiently small (Pew Global Attitudes Report, 2010). For a country in which 93% of the population is Sunni Muslim, this represents a stunning majority. Secularism never developed organically in the Muslim world, and indeed in many states secularization never occurred at all. The political ideology of secularism was imported to Egypt and other predominately Muslim states by Western imperialists, and ongoing political secularism after achieving independence is understood by many to be a negative postcolonial legacy (Hashemi, 2009; Zahid, 2010).

Thus, it seems both unnecessary and unlikely that the model of secularism popularized in Western civic societies could be implemented in Egypt. Furthermore, there is no indication that the removal of religion from the political sphere would, as Hobbes presumed, be necessary to preclude undemocratic practices on the part of religious parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Contrary to the understanding promoted in the three articles for the *National Post*, democracy is not necessarily a secular institution; it is simply a system of governance in which citizens are allowed to participate in the legislative process, usually in the form of elected representatives. Rights and freedoms are often enshrined in a constitution, which can also provide protection against abuses of power by limiting terms of office and establishing regular elections (Etzioni, 2007). The Muslim Brotherhood has not given any indication that they would act in opposition to these basic tenets of democracy. Widely heralded as the most coherent opposition group in Egypt, despite being outlawed in 1953, the Brotherhood announced in February that it would not "field a presidential candidate or seek a majority in parliament" in the interest of allowing other political parties to organize (Fam, 2011). One senior member of the party explained that "it would be unjust if the Brotherhood were to come to power before a majority of the society is prepared to support them" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 111). The Brotherhood, like other protestors in the Egyptian Revolution, is interested in individual liberties and opposed to autocracies. If one were to examine the rhetoric espoused by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and clearly delineate their ideology and actions from other Islamist groups such as al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya or Islamic Jihad, one would be hard-pressed to find reasons to believe that the Brotherhood would not act in accordance with baseline democratic constitutional provisions of limited terms and regular elections within a polyarchic system. One of the leaders of the party is quoted as saying that "if the Brotherhood should rule unwisely then face electoral defeat we will have failed the people and the new party will have the right to come to power. We will not take away anyone's rights" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 111).

Unlike the *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail* explicitly rejects received doctrines of closed secularism and suggests that Egypt could be the next state to join a nascent trend of predominately Muslim countries succeeding with a localized version of open secularism. Jeffrey Simpson notes that Turkey, with its "blend of moderate Islam and democracy, has brought political stability and economic recovery" (Simpson, 2011). Until 2007, Turkey was in an ongoing state of military-enforced secularism, modelled after France's *laicité*. However, in a landslide victory in 2007, Islamist Abdullah Gul was nominated as president, ushering in "a new era in Turkish politics" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 156) which has allowed "Muslim intellectuals, Muslim-based parties, and Muslim civil society groups to make an important and unique contribution to a process of democratic consolidation" (Hashemi, 2009, p. 158).

Looking further afield, one could easily find other examples of predominately Muslim democratic states that have rejected the Western model of closed secularism in favour of a localized system crafted to meet the needs of the population. Indonesia's *pancasila* and Malaysia's dual legal system are two examples of "successful" democracies that have managed to incorporate the communal needs of the Muslim population without compromising the liberties of the non-Muslim minorities (Hashemi, 2009).

Israel

In light of the foregoing examples, one wonders why the *National Post* insists that the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in Egyptian politics would result in a theocratic tyranny. In answer to this, it is necessary to move beyond surface-level concerns over democracy and address the underlying concern evident in articles from the *Post*: Israel.

Concerns over Israel appeared in two of the three articles I sampled from each media outlet, although the term appears earlier and more frequently in the two articles from the *National Post*. The two news organizations display different attitudes toward Israel, which helps account for their different levels of support for the Muslim Brotherhood. The *Globe and Mail*, which has been a bastion of liberal sentiment since confederation, acknowledges that the removal of Mubarak from the presidency leaves a vacuum of authority that could likely be filled by the Muslim Brotherhood. Jeffrey Simpson's article answering "Why did Ottawa drag its feet on Mubarak?" claims the Harper government was "on the wrong side of history" because it continued to see "the Middle East through the exclusive prism of Israel's interest" (Simpson, 2011). Patrick Martin goes further in suggesting that many Israelis and pro-Israel members of the Harper government "wanted the revolt to fail" (Martin, 2011). Both of these articles demonstrate a critical attitude toward Israel, and the overt pro-Israel policies of the Harper government. While it would be false to extrapolate that the *Globe and Mail* is in any way anti-Israel, both of the articles mentioned demonstrate an awareness that Egypt's cosy relationship with Israel was mandated by Mubarak and incurred feelings of guilt in many Egyptian Muslims, who felt that Mubarak's treaty with Israel was a betrayal of their Palestinian compatriots. As

opposition leader Mohamed ElBaradei said in a *Globe and Mail* article, "[the Israelis] have a peace treaty with Mubarak, but not one with the Egyptian people" (Jonas, 2011). This type of unilateral policy-making is precisely the type of tyranny of the majority that liberalism is opposed to, and thus the *Globe and Mail*'s critical treatment of Israel and tolerance of the Muslim Brotherhood is unsurprising.

On the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, the *National Post* makes no pretence of its actively pro-Israel agenda. Media magnate Conrad Black created the *Post* in 1998 as a conservative alternative to perceived liberal establishment newspapers—most notably, the *Globe and Mail*. Black later sold the paper to Israel Asper, under whose auspices the paper gained a reputation for being staunchly pro-Israel, a reputation that continued after Asper's death in 2003 (*CBC News*, 2003). Given the frequency and vitriol with which writers for the *Post* relate the Muslim Brotherhood to the safety of Israel, it is clear that recurring prejudicial attitudes toward the Muslim Brotherhood are motivated by pro-Israel sentiment within the *Post*'s corporate structure. Writers for the newspaper couch their bias in secularist sentiment. Ironically, the pro-Israel bias that motivates this sentiment is largely the product of religious zeal that is actually in direct contradiction to the strict secularism they advocate in their articles. The *Post* survives by catering to "theocons" who support Stephen Harper—many of whom are, like Harper, Christian Evangelists, for whom the safety of the people of Israel is not only a matter of human rights, but also a spiritual matter of supreme importance (McDonald, 2010). Certain sects of Christianity are as devoted to the dream of a return of the Jews to Israel as some Zionists, perhaps even more so, but for different reasons. Some evangelist Christians believe that the Jews' "presence [in Israel] is required for the unfolding of the final messianic drama" (Paldiel, 2006, p. 8). By peopling his cabinet with such noted Christian Zionists as Stockwell Day and James Lunney, Harper has ensured that his "pro-Israel tilt" will translate into pro-Israel policy (McDonald, 2010, p. 333). Thus, by affirming "Israel's support of Mubarak in Egypt" and endorsing Harper's "theocon" political ideology, the *Post* is rejecting the very model of strict secularism they insist must be installed in Egypt. According to this double standard, secularism is only necessary when the political elite is non-Christian, and democracy should only be encouraged in states that will exercise unconditional support of Israel.

The *National Post* may be self-contradicting, but they are not entirely unjustified in suggesting that the inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egyptian politics could fray relations with Israel. While the Brotherhood renounced violence in 1970, they supported the formation of Hamas during the First Intifada. More recently, a senior party member acknowledged that "the enmity between [the Brotherhood] and the Jews is for the sake of the land only" (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 11). Thus, it is true that while the Muslim Brotherhood is not opposed to Israel's mere existence, it is opposed to Israeli expansionist policies. This still remains a far cry from the rabidly anti-Semitic sentiment expressed by Ayman Al-Zawahiri, whom the *Post* invokes in connection to the Muslim Brotherhood in Jonas' article by insinuating that the

Brotherhood was responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981. Leiken and Brooke (2007) quote Al-Zawahiri as saying, "God, glory to him, made the religion the cause of enmity and the cause of our fight" (p. 116). This is yet another instance in which "members of the Western media… have pointed to the most extreme of Muslim political tracts and suggested that these are what Islamism, or even Islam, is really about" (Tripp, 2009).

Conclusion

The media serves both to shape and represent public discourse. The ways these two national newspapers have reported on the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Revolution are premised on divergent values around secularism and democracy, and different understandings of Islamism. Consequently, informed representations of the Muslim Brotherhood are compromised in favour of promoting institutional ideological agendas. To promote their various visions of the Brotherhood, both the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* present a static portrayal of what is, in reality, a dynamic and evolving organization. Furthermore, images of democracy and secularism around the globe are changing to accommodate shifting demographics and global economic developments. Closed secularism is waning as open secularism takes its place. The strict sovereignty of the Westphalian state system has evolved to allow for regional supranational alliances. Mohammad Abduh's brand of Salafism, which provided the foundation for Al-Banna's movement, allows for such accommodation. Consequently, popular media outlets that disseminate caricatures of the Muslim Brotherhood as a reactionary bulwark of a by-gone era are establishing themselves in that very position by clinging to antique ideals of democracy and secularism. Both national newspapers are attempting to shape nation-wide understandings of Islamism, but what is revealed in a comparison is a conflict over what democracy and secularism should look like, not only in Egypt but also in Canada and around the globe.

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