“Labor’s Monkey Wrench”: Newsweekly Coverage of the 1962-63 New York Newspaper Strike

James F. Tracy
Florida Atlantic University

Abstract: This article provides a frame and textual analysis of coverage appearing in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report of the 114-day 1962-63 strike of the International Typographical Union Local 6 against New York City newspapers. The strike was particularly important for asserting the union’s collective bargaining rights and establishing its stance on automated printing processes. Analysis of the newsweeklies’ treatment of the strike suggests how these outlets related the event in terms favourable to the newspaper publishers, while misrepresenting or disparaging the union’s position in and justification for the strike.

Résumé : Cet article propose une analyse textuelle de la couverture médiatique de Time, Newsweek et U.S. News & World Report de la grève qui opposait l’International Typographical Union Local 6 aux quotidiens new-yorkais, conflit qui a duré 114 jours en 1962-63. La grève a été particulièrement importante dans l’affirmation des droits syndicaux à la négociation collective et dans le positionnement des syndicats face aux processus d’impression automatisés. Une analyse de la manière dont les hebdomadaires ont couvert la grève suggère que ces derniers ont relaté l’événement de manière à favoriser les éditeurs des journaux tout en déformant, voire en dénigrant, la position du syndicat sur la grève et sa façon de justifier celle-ci.

Keywords: Media; Mass media; Labour; Strikes; Collective bargaining; Newspapers—United States; Newsweeklies—United States; International Typographical Union; Frame analysis

Introduction
In the late 1950s a struggle was well underway across North America between newspaper publishers and newsworkers over union jurisdiction and job security vis-à-vis the move toward installation of teletypesetting and like forms of automation. Between 1951 and 1961 there were 187 strikes affecting 288 newspapers in the United States alone (“What’s Happening to Newspapers,” 1963). This article

James Tracy is Assistant Professor in the School of Communication and Multimedia Studies, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL, U.S.A. 33431-0991. E-mail: jftracy@fau.edu.

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examines one such standoff, between the International Typographical Union (ITU) Local 6 and New York newspapers occurring in 1962 and 1963. This strike’s timing and scope made it especially decisive, for both the ITU and New York’s newspaper publishers realized how the guidelines for its resolution would influence the parameters of contract negotiations at newspapers throughout North America (Raskin, 1963).

News coverage of strikes has been examined from critical perspectives since the 1970s. The Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980) has provided detailed analyses of how news media in the United Kingdom have presented workplace struggles. Goldman & Rajagopal (1991), Parenti (1986), and Puette (1992) have broadened critical approaches to news coverage of labour and industrial conflict, while more recent studies by Kumar (2001) and Martin (2004) have examined mainstream press coverage of U.S. strikes in the 1990s. An emerging set of studies has addressed the shifting organizational structures of newswarriors (McKercher, 2002) and the history and press coverage of strikes by the American Newspaper Guild (“the Guild”) in the 1960s (Brennen, 2005; Tracy, 2004). This article uses a method informed by news-framing research (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Reese, 2001; Tuchman, 1978) to consider how a strike waged by blue-collar newswarriors was presented in three national news periodicals: *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* (*U.S. News*). To more fully acknowledge the coverage of the strike, it is necessary to first provide a context for the event by looking at the ITU’s concerns and the motivations and interests of New York’s newspaper publishers.

**Factors behind the 1962-63 strike and lockout**

In the two decades following World War II, the ITU was one of the most successful unions in North America, with members working less than 40 hours per week, earning over $5,000 annually and having the security of company-sponsored pensions (Lipset, Trow, & Coleman, 1956). According to Lipset, Trow, & Coleman’s comprehensive study of the ITU’s internal politics, most all of its members “share[d] a roughly common income and status” (1956, p. 142, italics in original) and regarded themselves as “a community of equals” (1956, p. 143). The union struck only reluctantly to preserve or recapture past gains, and it was successful throughout the 1950s in maintaining a “closed shop,” despite the illegality of this under the *Taft-Hartley Act* (Lipset, Trow, & Coleman 1956). The ITU’s largest local, Local 6 (known as “Big Six”) was organized by *New York Tribune* publisher Horace Greeley in 1852 (Lipset, Trow, & Coleman, 1956).

Local 6 was all but forced into a strike to secure three demands it had been denied for several years: 1) The right of the union to bargain for its own contract rather than accepting a pre-set “pattern,” 2) compensation for the automation of some work and guarantees against layoffs, and 3) a reduction of the work week to 35 hours. The contract for the New York Newspaper Guild, the union representing journalists and clerical workers, expired on October 31, 1962, while all other union contracts came up for renewal on December 7, the latter date set after resolution of a strike led by the photoengravers in December 1953 (“N.Y. Settle-
ment Is Near," 1963). Thereafter the other unions typically ratified the same wage
and benefits package extended to the Guild (Raskin, 1963). The ITU explained
how the publishers had delayed negotiations, for several months during contract
renewal talks with Local 6 in 1957, 1959, and 1961, “turn[ing] a deaf ear when our
negotiators discussed the special problems and working conditions of union
printers. Instead, they would hand us a contract based on their negotiations with
the Newspaper Guild for editorial and clerical workers, and they would say, in
effect, “that’s what we’re giving you; take it or leave it.” (“Why New York
Printers,” 1963, p. 2)
This bargaining pattern was traceable to the formation of the Publishers
Association, a coalition created to challenge the alliance of unions by shutting
down operations and locking out workers. The publishers preferred to deal with
the Guild rather than the ITU, which they regarded as much more formidable
(Powers, 2005). Following the settlement of a 73-day Guild strike at the World-
Telegram and Sun in 1950, from which considerable gains were made in wages
and job security (“World-Telegram Strike Ends,” 1950), the 14 unions repre-
senting New York City newsworkers requested the same package from other
papers and struck repeatedly until their demands were met (Sleigh, 1998). In addi-
tion, the chapel system empowered unions to designate which members would
work, and which outlets they would work for, thus increasing the ability for
striking workers to find work elsewhere when papers did not collectively shut
down. This made strikes potentially unrelenting (Sleigh, 1998). Still, when the
bargaining pattern with the Guild was established, the Publishers Association was
tested only once, in 1958, during a deliverers’ union strike. When Big Six recog-
nized the deliverers’ picket line, the seven member papers shut down for 19 days.
Local 6 began to negotiate with the Publishers Association in July 1962,
almost six months before the December 7 deadline. Rejecting the Guild’s overall
$8.50 package, Local 6 asked for a $10 weekly salary increase for the first year,
$8.45 for the second, a 35-hour work week (down from 36.5) and paid sick leave
(“Effects of the New York Newspaper Strike,” 1962). When the publishers con-
tinued to stall this time, union members voted 2007 to 47 on December 2, 1962, to
authorize a strike if there was no agreement by December 7. Believing the ITU
was bluffing, the publishers held firm, and the union walked out at 2:00 a.m. on
Because the union did not want to be accused of causing a news blackout, it
only struck four of the Publishers Association’s then-nine member papers—The
New York Times, the Daily News, the World-Telegram and Sun, and the Journal
American—noting that these papers had the financial wherewithal to endure a
long standoff. Hours after workers walked off the job, the New York Herald Tri-
bune, The Mirror, the New York Post, and the Long Island Star Journal shut
down, and the Long Island Press cut back its circulation (Kelber & Schelsinger,
1967), initiating a standoff with nearly 20,000 unionized workers.
While Local 6’s judgment and the publishers’ lockout were common knowl-
edge within journalistic circles, they were seldom discussed in the coverage
examined below, thus contributing to the impression that the union alone was to blame for the news blackout. According to the ITU,

> The four newspapers that voluntarily closed their doors could have supplied New Yorkers with all the required news coverage and advertisements, but they chose to aggravate the crisis—presumably at the risk of having to shut down permanently to whip up public opinion against the union and to show their allegiance to the tight fisted politics of the Publishers Association. (“Why New York Printers Had to Call,” 1963, p. 2)

Automation was also a concern of the union, albeit a lesser one, alongside the publishers’ refusal to bargain. Typographers perceived automation as a threat to job security, and with good reason. “Many crafts,” the Canadian Royal Commission on Newspapers observed with hindsight in 1981, “have already all but disappeared, such as those of the typographers, proofreaders, photo-engravers, and stereotypers,” (Canada, 1981, p. 188), because of automation, computerization, and attendant de-skilling in the Canadian newspaper industry. “These former craftsmen,” like their U.S. counterparts, “are still employed to do the new jobs, but they remain fearful of losing even these jobs to other new machines, or less-skilled employees, because the new machines call for fewer skills.” (Canada, 1981, p. 188). Conscious of these developments, Local 6 sought restrictions on the publishers’ introduction of teletype equipment, yet their concerns were often misrepresented in the press. For example, the *Times*’ A. H. Raskin reported that the ITU was “fearful that a change would be a first step toward the use of computers to displace Linotype operators” (1963, p. 22). According to Raskin, the union therefore sought the establishment of a workers’ fund supported by savings from limited automation and computerization. Yet Raskin’s assessment overlooked steps the union had taken to accommodate automation. According to ITU president Elmer Brown, the ITU’s alleged fear of automation contrasted with how the union “trained, directly and indirectly, thousands of [its] members in new processes, in photocomposition, in electronics, and in virtually every phase of ‘automation’” (Brown, 1963b, p. 44-45).

Having provided a background of the history and specific causes of the strike, we turn to an overview of the sample and rationale for the selection of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News*, as well as an explanation of these magazines’ role in the information economy of New York and North America.

**Rationale for selection of newsweeklies**

The selected newsweeklies are ideal for considering how the strike was covered by mainstream media, especially since recordings of broadcast reports from this time are largely unavailable as archival sources. In addition, although New Yorkers initially turned to a variety of media as alternatives to newspapers, including out-of-town and foreign-language papers publishing English print editions (“Effects of the New York Newspaper Strike,” 1962), newsmagazines likewise became sought-after information sources.

From December 1962 until May 1963, 37 articles focused on the strike—16 in *Time*, 14 in *Newsweek*, and 7 in *U.S. News*. Each periodical also had a special
department lending considerable attention to the strike; *Time’s* and *Newsweek’s* divisions were titled “The Press” and *US News’s* “Labor Week.” *Time* and *Newsweek* published weekly in New York, with national circulations in 1962 of 2,654,550 and 1,529,440 respectively (McCallister, 1962). *Time* alone had 300,000 subscribers to its regional New York edition and, throughout the strike, sold as many as 50,000 more copies per week at New York newsstands (“Effects of,” 1962). The national circulation of *U.S. News*, published in Washington, DC, was 1,242,510 (McCallister, 1962). “The weekly news magazines did the most to increase their opportunities in the New York market,” according to a study conducted by graduate students and faculty at Columbia University’s School of Journalism. “Channeling all extra copies to metropolitan newsstands, these magazines sought to capture . . . those who usually read a newspaper while on the subway, bus or train” (“Effects of,” 1962, p. 20).

While the newsmagazines were prominent in New York during the strike, the representation of the event in these outlets also suggests how national coverage played out in U.S. dailies and electronic media. As Herbert Gans observes, because newsmagazines “come out after all the headlines are known, they review the major events of the week, summarizing and integrating the daily newspaper and television reports into a single whole, and speculating, when possible, about the future” (1979, p. 4). In this way, such outlets contribute their own interpretation, which may expand on or even diverge from daily reports, making an effort to include “details that their daily peers may have ignored or failed to notice, notably biographical details about people who make headlines, and data or speculation about their motives, when they are available” (Gans, 1979, p. 4). Through their weekly surveys, newsmagazines bring descriptive and interpretive frameworks to issues and events. With this in mind, we now turn to conceptualizing how this strike was presented in these venues.

**Framing a newspaper strike**

Research on framing explains how journalistic outlets “frame” social agents and phenomena through news coverage into distinct incidents that the journalists call “stories.” Tuchman explains how the news media arrange otherwise random social occurrences within “frames” that “turn non-recognizable happenings or amorphous talk into a discernible event” (1978, p. 192). The frame accordingly “imparts a character to that occurrence” (p. 193). According to Entman, “[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (1993, p. 52, italics in original). As a concept, framing is an especially apt approach for analyzing mainstream media’s treatment of labour, since even though “[s]trikes are the end product of 1 percent of the collective bargaining that unions do,” they “account for more than 90 percent of the news coverage of unions” (Kalaski, 1992, p. 4).

Iyengar explains how by centring on who or what is liable for a problem, journalists assign “causal responsibility” and “treatment responsibility,” each of
which “seeks to establish who has the power (and interest) to alleviate or perpetuate” a given problem (1991, p. 8). These subtle mechanics of the frame tend to hold one individual or a sole institution accountable for a problem and look to another for restoration of the status quo. This dynamic of framing—of “personalizing” and “dramatizing” figures, events, and issues by concentrating on the trials and tribulations of specific “heroes,” “victims,” and “wrongdoers” (Bennett, 2005, p. 40)—produces what Lance Bennett terms “a ‘can’t-see-the-forest-for-the-trees’ information bias that makes it difficult to see the big (institutional) picture that lies beyond the many actors crowding center stage who are caught in the eye of the news camera” (2005, p. 40).

By framing how events unfold and how social phenomena are perceived, newsweekly coverage cumulatively shapes public sentiment toward social actors and institutions by cognitively and culturally organizing phenomena, imbuing them with meaning over the short and long term. According to Reese, while cognitive frames organize and make temporal activity coherent, “more ‘cultural’ frames don’t stop with organizing one story, but invite us to marshal a cultural understanding and keep on doing so beyond the immediate information” (2001, p. 13.). Cultural frames culminate in the formation of mythical, or “commonsensical,” understandings of social reality that together constitute the ideational legitimation of institutional processes and practices.

In almost every instance, framing also involves a subtle inducement to view an event from the perspective of certain social power interests, thus complicating the notion of “objectivity.” “Undoubtedly an ‘objective’ news report would quote ‘both’ sides,” Hackett and Zhao note, “yet through the juxtaposition of stories and in other ways, news accounts can actively work to privilege some interpretations and exclude or marginalize alternative ways of interpreting or contextualizing the seemingly same event” (1998, p. 119). For example, throughout their coverage of the strike, *Time* and *Newsweek* carried an almost equal number of quotes from publishers and union leaders or their representatives (16 to 20 and 20 to 23, respectively), in addition to government officials (8 and 7), implying the magazines’ neutral treatment of each side. (*U.S. News*’ coverage, in contrast, is especially skewed in this regard, with 11 quotes from publishers and only 1 from a union representative.) However, closer textual analysis of how the references are positioned within the frame suggests that Local 6 president Bertram Powers’ statements are used within a broader frame that calls his motivations into question, often depicting the standoff as “Powers’ strike.” While accounts of Powers are not uniformly negative, his centrality in the frame and the attentiveness to his qualities and activities apart from the dynamics of union solidarity and action reinforce a deeper cultural notion that organized labour is malevolent, self-serving, and dishonest. This dichotomous treatment of social phenomena reinforces an impression of accord between the news media and their readerships, as Goldman & Rajagopal observe, “by defining the latter against what has been isolated as deviant. Shared norms and values are stressed; opposing interests remain unelaborated” (1991, p. 160).
This impression was reinforced through a second thematic frame, the “victimized public.” For the first four weeks of the strike, this frame was especially prevalent, characterized by the alleged effects of the strike on the public qua inconvenienced bystanders. The frame had a variant early on and as the strike concluded, wherein the public was more abstractly rendered as the economy or the beset financial means of the newspapers. Taken together, the frames implicate Powers as not only the cause of the public’s ill treatment, but moreover as an object serving to distinguish the concerns and interests of labour (conniving, unlawful, pecuniary) from those of the publishers and public/economy (upright, law-abiding, victimized). The following provides a more detailed analysis of how this framing process played out, through a close textual analysis of the discursive elements composing each frame.

Frame one: Powers’ strike

*Time, Newsweek,* and *U.S. News* personalized their coverage by focusing especially on Powers’ specific statements and activities. Big Six’s counterparts, the New York newspaper publishers, were much more vaguely represented by the Publishers Association or their sole bargaining representative, *New York Times* vice president Amory Bradford. “On one side of the argument,” *Time* reported, “stood Bertram A. Powers, 40, president of New York Big Six of the International Typographical Union;” who, “without even bothering to notify the other six printing craft unions . . . pulled his men off the morning Times and the News, the evening World-Telegram and the Journal-American—the four Manhattan dailies that he deemed sufficiently prosperous to endure a lengthy siege” (“Deadlock,” 1962, p. 41, emphases added). On the other side stood the Publishers Association, established “for the express purpose of presenting labor with a united front” (“Deadlock,” 1962, p. 41).

Powers came to symbolize labour’s irrational, if not criminal, stance. *Newsweek* referred to Powers as “the slim, stubborn president of the New York Typographical Union” (“Rolling Again,” 1963, p. 64), while *Time* quotes *New York Times* columnist Scotty Reston: “Striking the Times is like striking an old lady” (“Striking an Old Lady,” 1963, p. 28). The papers’ and public’s misfortunes were repeatedly linked to Powers’ alleged drive as union administrator. Indeed, the main cause of the shutdown and potential demise of several papers “was not so much the customary haggle over pay scales as Bert Powers’ ambition to lead the I.T.U. back to organized glory” (“Deadlock,” 1962, p. 41). “To Journal American publisher Joseph Kingsbury-Smith,” *Newsweek* reports, “Powers is an opportunist trying ‘to build up his reputation as a tough union leader’” (“Powers Play,” 1963, p. 54) so that he might ascend to the ITU’s chief administrative spot. “Strike leader” Powers is “regarded as a tough bargainer” and “a militant unionist,” *U.S. News* similarly notes. “[A] victory in this strike could help him, just as a defeat could hurt. Mr. Powers is up for re-election as the local’s president next May” (“Strike Leader Powers,” 1962, p. 11).

Such assertions were speculative at best, as was the acceptance at face value of the newspapers’ pleas of poverty. In fact, of all the New York papers, only the
Times routinely disclosed its financial records (“Newspaper Strike Changed Many Habits,” 1963). Powers anticipated the anthropomorphizing of the newspapers as “potential fatalities” when he told the Times that if any paper went under, “it would be a matter of suicide, not murder” (quoted in “Newspaper Strike Negotiations Set to Resume,” 1962, p. 4), an observation confirmed by the publishers’ lockout. Even so, Time related the papers’ financial dealings in medical or funerary metaphors. “[I]f sustained,” the strike could “kill off as many as three Manhattan dailies,” including publisher Dorothy Schiff’s Post, “a liberal afternoon tabloid with a tenuous lease on life” after having been given “periodic and generous transfusions from Dolly Schiff’s personal fortune.” “Another potential fatality,” the report continues, “is Hearst’s tabloid morning Mirror, which . . . is famishing for want of advertising income” (“The Bitter and the Bright,” 1963, p. 87). “The prospect of such fatalities,” according to Time, “weighs lightly on the conscience of Bert Powers” (“Deadlock,” 1962, p. 41). Bolstering Powers’ demagogic semblance, Newsweek points to union members’ limited strike benefits vis-à-vis Powers’ “$15,000 a year” salary, further noting how the workers’ hollow reproduction of “Powers’ argument” concerning the publishers’ non-co-operation “did not stand up to rigid inspection.” “In strike pay lines,” the article notes, “unionists grumblingly echoed Powers’ charges that the New York publishers, with the heavy holiday ad season behind them, really didn’t care whether the strike was settled soon” (“Powers Play,” 1963, p. 54).

Again, Powers is not always depicted negatively, yet the sheer focus on him personalizes the coverage, while eclipsing any consideration of the union’s collective action, motivations, or objectives. As Local 6’s strike paper observed, a story in Time “says that the strike is due to ‘Boss Powers’ advice. Not a word about the secret referendum in which we voted 2003 to 47 to authorize the strike, not a line to explain our side of the story, although the facts have been made available to Time reporters” (“Beware of Rumors,” 1962, n.p.). According to Newsweek, “Tall, gray-blonde Bert Powers is Publishers’ enemy No. 1 in New York’s longest newspaper blackout ever” (“Powers Play,” 1963, p. 54). A brief teaser prefacing a two-page report in U.S. News (“How a Big City,” 1962) concentrates on “Strike Leader Powers,” with the subtitle, “His motives under fire,” pointing to Powers’ purportedly ulterior motives: that “[h]e refuses to accept the $8.50 raise, won in November by the Newspaper Guild as a pattern,” along with “seek[ing] to insure his prestige and future both within the ITU and among New York City labor spokesmen” (“Strike Leader Powers,” 1962, p. 11). “One angry newspaper executive,” says Powers “is ‘power mad.’” As U.S. News similarly observes, Powers is “a tough bargainer” and “a militant unionist” (“Strike Leader Powers,” 1962, p. 11). A neck-up shot of Powers, with his eyes averted to the upper right in Dragnet denouement style, reinforces his blameworthiness. Echoing the publishers’ line, U.S. News columnist David Lawrence obliquely referred to Powers as “a dictator” determined “to hold out until some of the employers are tottering on the edge of bankruptcy” (1963, p. 96).
While Powers was repeatedly scrutinized, the publishers’ rationale for the shutdown was seldom addressed, although it was likely intended to foster public condemnation of the strike, a strike-breaking technique routinely employed from the 1920s by government and business alike (Ginsberg, 1986). The publishers “chose to lock out our members,” ITU president Elmer Brown remarked, “and thus attempt to stir up public resentment against the ITU and its New York locals” (1963b, p. 76). By not highlighting the publishers’ lockout, the newsweeklies reinforced Powers’ culpability for the standoff. *Time* pointed to how Powers and Local 6, “by striking four Manhattan dailies last December incited into silence all seven of the city’s papers and two on Long Island” (“No Motion,” 1963, p. 50). *U.S. News* noted, “The strike has idled 18,000 workers on nine papers and is costing publishers and their employees [sic] an estimated 4 million dollars a day” (“Score on Strikes at Newspapers,” 1963, p. 96). “The plight of the New York printers,” *Newsweek* columnist Henry Hazlitt opined, “hardly seemed desperate enough to justify their action in calling a strike at the height of the Christmas season, throwing 20,000 people directly out of work, injuring thousands of small newspaper stands and stationary stores, and depriving 5 million people of their daily papers” (1962, p. 60). “We’ve been sacrificed to a power play by the ITU,” one sportswriter remarked in a *Newsweek* piece on furloughed journalists migrating to broadcast outlets for temporary work (“Job Hunters,” 1963, p. 85). So persistent was this theme that the ITU later “doubt[ed] that more than 20 per cent of the people in New York City ever found out that the strike was not against all of the newspapers” (“New York Members,” 1963, p. 123).

Even when the publishers’ interests are represented alongside Powers, the personalization dynamic tends to place the former in a vastly more positive light. For example, *Time* reduced the newspaper shutdown to “Two Men” (1963, p. 42): Powers and *New York Times* vice president and publishers’ bargainer Amory Bradford. Photos of Bradford and Powers accompany the story. The first, captioned “Publishers’ Bradford,” declared beneath, “Meeting in a common cause”; it is a close-up of a bespectacled and seemingly erudite Bradford, looking to his left with eyebrows raised, apparently in mid-sentence. The second, a body-length shot of Powers on the picket line, is captioned, “Printers’ Powers Picketing,” concluding, “But with nothing to say.” The imagery suggests two forms of diplomacy—one tactful and the other brash and irrational. *Time*’s accompanying story of the two men is likewise disparate. Powers, who upon assuming the leadership of Big Six “issued the command that struck nine dailies dumb,” is introduced as “a shrewd and self-made man whose formal education ended with the second year of high school.” Bradford, on the other hand, a “product of the Ivy League,” had “traveled a vastly different course to his collision with the union leader.” After practising corporate law, he moved swiftly up the managerial ladder at the *Times* to become the publishers’ “logical choice to confront the printers’ truculence.”

Echoing the message in the accompanying photos of Bradford and Powers, the article pins ultimate blame on the latter, who “could have kept his men working at their jobs while he bargained with men whom only his own blindness prevents
him from recognizing as reasonable” (“Two Men,” 1963, p. 42). Yet Powers recalls how Bradford was especially hostile toward the press. Bradford was, according to Powers’ account, “very difficult” to get along with. “He was a nice guy. He just wasn’t suited for that role. Very high-handed. He once knocked over a couple of TV guys who were trying to question him and he wanted to get through...But he didn’t endear himself to the press. He didn’t care, either” (Powers, 2005).

In this and similar ways, the publishers’ side could just as easily have been depicted as headstrong and self-serving. An illustrative example involves the alleged value of the package asked for by the ITU. At the strike’s conclusion, Time drew on the statements of Bradford to note how Powers “went into the strike demanding a $37-a-week [sic] package increase,” but only received “$12.50” (“Costly Settlement,” 1963, p. 67). Yet the first figure (actually $38) was arrived at through the publishers’ estimate of the largest potential cost of the wage and benefits package Powers unofficially asked for, a figure repeated relentlessly throughout the strike. The New York Times later admitted how the alleged figure for a strike settlement was inflated to make the union’s demands seem excessive. Writing in the Times, A. H. Raskin noted,

Long after [Powers] had cut his off-the-record figure in half, the publishers kept pointing to his formal call for a $38 package. At one stage the union chief admonished [Bradford], “You’ve got people so convinced I want $38 that if I get $34 my members will say, ‘Where’s the other $4?’” (Raskin, 1963, p. 22)

The newweeklies’ foremost profile of the strike appeared as a Time cover story—a story that in almost every way epitomized the attribution of cause to Powers. A menacing illustration of Powers, captioned “Strike leader Bert Powers,” appears on the magazine’s cover, alongside a monkey wrench wedged between two spools of paper. In the upper right-hand corner, Time asks, “Is labor’s only weapon a monkey wrench?” Nonetheless, statements or behaviour that might have confirmed Powers’ criminal persona were difficult to come by, and his biographical information was equally pedestrian. “The most inflammatory evidence that could be summoned to discredit him,” Kelber & Schlesinger note, “was his admitted admiration of John L. Lewis,” United Mine Workers president and leader of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (1967, p. 119). The five-page story nevertheless depicts Powers as the labour movement’s enfant terrible, and he serves as a departure point for a broader denunciation of the entire U.S. labour movement.

While Powers identified his position consistently through the first person plural—“we” and “our”—Time implied that the union leader was far more self-serving. Powers was “a glacially handsome man [who] spoke coldly about his situation.” “All Powers wanted,” the magazine argues, “was his own kind of contract” (“Hard Times,” 1963, p. 13, emphases added). Yet Powers said nothing from which such a conclusion might be drawn. In fact, his perceptive appraisal of strike coverage is quoted but otherwise unconsidered. “‘All this pressure and complaint was expected. Management is right and we’re always wrong. That’s the
way strikes are [depicted]. I’m not bothered” (“Hard Times,” 1963, p. 13). *Time*
tightened the focus on Powers in the initial paragraphs by highlighting an
exchange between him and President Kennedy. At a press conference, Kennedy
had referenced Powers “by name, declar[ing] that the Powers-led New York
newspaper strike, now eleven weeks old, had ‘long since passed the point
of public toleration.”’ Powers, however, “remained unbothered. ‘President
Kennedy,’ he said with tight-lipped calm, ‘has been ill-advised’” (“Hard Times,”
1963, p. 13).

Shortly thereafter, in the same article, *Time* pointed to the ineffectiveness of
Powers’ determination. It noted Powers ‘ contention, “‘We should concern our-
selves with negotiations,’” but the magazine counters, “Yet it is precisely in the
field of negotiations that Powers has failed. And in his failure he has helped bring
about a disgraceful strike” (“Hard Times,” 1963, p. 14). Again, with no mention
of the publishers’ recalcitrance, Powers’ fault is emphasized. “From the begin-
ning,” the report argues, “the publishers made clear their suspicion that Powers
was not bargaining in good faith, that he was really wielding his strike monkey
wrench to enhance his power in the I.T.U. and catapult himself into the union’s
international presidency” (“Hard Times,” 1963, pp. 14-15). *Time* then turns to
describing an extravagant Miami Beach conference attended by elder U.S. labour
leaders who had “won badges of labor honor in the form of busted heads and
bloodied noses during the days of labor’s surge to power” (“Hard Times,” 1963,
p. 14).

The article’s images similarly relate the strike through the lens of violence
and union “muscle,” a term used by Powers on one occasion yet echoed repet-
eedly throughout the piece. The conflict is again reduced to two parties, with
accompanying photos of Powers and Bradford. Powers’ photo, captioned
“Typographers’ Powers/One talks muscle,” is taken from a slightly lower angle,
showing him in mid-sentence with forefinger imperiously cutting the air. Brad-
ford’s photo, however—“Publishers’ Bradford/The other talks suspicion”—pre-
sents Bradford with head in hand and eyebrows slightly raised, as if in a state of
following page, captioned “Detroit’s 1941 Ford Strike: A vast and vital place,
bloodily won,” depicts autoworkers fiercely attacking a would-be replacement
worker. The photo’s placement in the story, alongside a bulleted list of the ITU’s
positions—“CONTRACT EXPIRATION,” “WAGES AND BENEFITS,” “JOB
SECURITY” (“Hard Times,” 1963, p. 15)—contributes to the cultural frame of
labour’s deviousness, while calling into question the legitimacy of the union’s
demands.

The second news-coverage frame, that of the strike’s alleged effects on the
public, acts symbiotically with the personalization dynamic of the first frame,
which looks to Powers as the sole cause of the strike. We now turn to a closer
analysis of the second frame.
Frame two: The victimized public

For the first five weeks of the strike and lockout, the public was cast as the principal victim of “Power’s strike,” with *U.S. News* a main outlet employing this frame. Early on, the magazine included twin profiles of newspaper strikes in New York and Cleveland, where Cleveland’s *Plain Dealer* and *Press and News* were in a standoff with the Guild (“What Newspaper Strikes Did to Two Cities,” 1962). The story highlighted the remarks of four New York publishers and a member of New York’s Board of Trade; no union officials or workers were quoted. It further tied the fate of the papers to the strike, announcing in the bold-faced lead, “For New York, there was the added prospect that some papers might not survive” (“What Newspaper Strikes,” 1962, p. 58).

While *U.S. News* elaborated on how the *Post* and the *Herald Tribune* were “apparently least able to survive a prolonged strike” (“What Newspaper Strikes,” 1962, p. 58), it failed to explain how both papers had voluntarily shut down and locked out their workers. Thus, through exclusion, the article links the fate of the two papers to Local 6’s initial walkout. By seldom distinguishing between strike and shutdown, the article placed sole responsibility for the blackout with the union. When *U.S. News* did distinguish between the two—once in the text and at another point in a boxed breakdown of the strikes, titled “Unions’ Demands, Papers’ Offers”—it further implicated labour as principally culpable for the *Post* and *Herald Tribune*’s potential demise by focusing on the publishers’ solidarity instead of the workers’. While the “[m]embers of other unions” endorsed Big Six’s walkout at the first four papers by “refus[ing] to cross the picket lines,” in the next sentence, following the subhead “Strike against all,” the magazine highlighted the publishers’ camaraderie: “The five other papers promptly closed, saying a strike against one was a strike against all” (“What Newspaper Strikes,” 1962, p. 58).

Four photographs accompanying the story emphasize the public’s plight at the hands of striking workers while driving home the notion that the papers’ shutdown was solely caused by the ITU. The first photo, of unidentified picketers parading outside the *Times* building, is captioned “PICKETS [sic] in the printers’ strike that closed down nine major dailies.” A second picture, directly below, depicts several anonymous members “of the city’s news-starved millions” encircling a newsstand “to obtain out-of-town papers.” A third photo shows the makeshift advertising in a department-store window as pedestrians pass. The final photo shows “SUBWAY RIDERS” who, “mostly without newspapers to read, stare unhappily into space” (“What Newspaper Strikes,” 1962, p. 59). In the context of downplaying the publishers’ shutdown, the four images together strongly associate labour with the public’s travails.

*Newsweek* similarly used a food shortage metaphor in describing the strike and lockout. “The sad truth,” *Newsweek* observed, “was that in New York, which accounts for one tenth the circulation of all U.S. newspapers, the news famine was a depressing factor in the lives and fortunes of nearly all of its 8 million people” (“The News Gap,” 1962, p. 46). A photo depicting a model in a department store
window “who jotted specials down on a blackboard” was captioned, “Newspaper ads were never like this” (“The News Gap,” 1962, p. 46). Indeed, Newsweek went to bizarre lengths to invoke an impression of misery and alienation.

The effect of the news blackout was obvious everywhere. A woman on a subway train, staring into the faces of fellow riders who did not have their usual newspapers to hide behind, said one day last week, “I never realized before how many ugly people there are in this town.” (“The News Gap,” 1962, p. 46)

While emphasis on the public’s misfortunes was a key theme of the newspaper publishers’ pronouncements and was reflected in many of the newsweekly stories, public sentiment was dismissed by U.S. labor secretary Willard Wirtz four weeks into the strike. On January 6, Wirtz created a Board of Public Accountability, consisting of three judges who acted as third-party negotiators to assess the strike’s impact. The publishers welcomed the board’s creation, as did seven of the newspaper unions, but the ITU and two of the other unions refused to take part, fearing a proposal that would favour the publishers. The Times reported Wirtz’s conclusion “that public opinion, ‘because it is unorganized,’ is a small force at the time of the crisis” and “at present is expressed only at the point of interruption of services during the strike” (“Wirtz Finds Public Impotent in Strikes,” 1963, p. 1).

The highlighting of these specific remarks was revealing given the board’s other insights in its final account, most of which were omitted or selectively reported on by the business press and similar outlets. Writing in his New Yorker column, press critic A. J. Liebling observed,

I found the report of the three-judge Board of Public Accountability astonishingly informative. I say “astonishingly” because I had first read of their findings in news stories published by the Standard, the Wall Street Journal, the Brooklyn Eagle, and the Journal of Commerce. All of these papers excerpted from the much fuller excerpts sent out by the Associated Press and United Press International, and all of them deformed the content. (Liebling, 1963, p. 115)

Following this event, stories specifically emphasizing a dangerously inconvenienced public were almost non-existent. This frame nevertheless persisted by conflating and anthropomorphizing the economy and the public to the point where they essentially appeared as one “victim.” Time referred to the “many wounds” created by the strike: “Nearly 20,000 men are out of work; 5,700,000 readers are without their papers; 350 blind news vendors have shuttered their stands; the city’s economic pulse has measurably slowed” (“Two Men,” 1963, p. 42). Drawing from the publishers’ repeated pronouncements, Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News continually pointed to estimations of the economic damage suffered by the newspapers and the New York economy as a result of the strike and shutdown. The repeatedly inflated figures, alongside the continual condemnation of Powers, also gave a scientific—and thus authoritative—tone to the stories. U.S. News noted early on, “For most of the people left idle the strike was a financial catastrophe,” because while “[o]nly 3,000 printers struck . . . the number of
people thrown out of work totaled about 18,000. Lost wages approached 3 million dollars a week” (“How a Big City Lives,” 1962, p. 36).

In contrast, the magazines routinely disparaged the ITU’s concerns regarding automation, its non-monetary positions of a shorter work week and a uniform contract-expiration date. For example, *Time* asserted, “And while Powers had insisted that his chief concern was not money but three matters of ‘principle,’ he got all that he wanted on only one of those principles” (“Costly Settlement,” 1963, p. 67), an incorrect conclusion given that the union in fact succeeded on all three measures. Characteristically, *Time* underlined the publishers’ reservations:

The printers—and 17,000 other newspaper employees—have already lost 13 weeks’ pay to win a wage boost that is little more than what they could have got last December. “It will take them years to make up their lost income,” said one publisher. Added Director Walter Thayer of the Herald Tribune [and Publishers Association President]: “This is not the kind of thing where anybody wins.” (“Costly Settlement,” 1963, pp. 67-68)

In the last weeks of the standoff a barrage of monetary estimates appeared in the coverage alongside reports of a devastated New York economy. Yet these were chiefly the concerns of the publishers and advertisers. As such, they emphasized the publishers’ line of how the event was wasteful and pointless. The publishers’ position was clearly rendered in responses to questions *Newsweek* posed to Powers and Thayer. The latter argued,

At the end of eleven weeks of strike [sic] the total loss in advertising and circulation revenues totals over $55 million of which $33 million would have been slated for wages and benefits to 20,000 of our employes [sic] of our newspapers. The losses to businesses in the city as a result of the strike are beyond any reasonable estimate.” (“Post Time,” 1963, p. 61)

Although many of these reports were unconfirmed and proven false months later, they gave the immediate sense of condemning the typographers, especially for their supposed indifference, while simultaneously discounting collective bargaining as a suitable means for settling worker–management conflict. As a *Time* article, titled “At Last,” noted,

Bert Powers’ striking printers kept [the strike] going by thumbing down a package deal of $12.63 a week. And why not? On the job, the top day [sic] scale was $141 per week; for not working they were getting an average of $121 a week in strike benefits and unemployment insurance (both tax free). (“At Last,” 1963, p. 80)

Yet an independent report concluded that single printers received U.S.$68.40 from the strike fund, while those with dependents were given $96.80, with both becoming eligible for state compensation seven weeks into the strike (“Effects of the New,” 1962). If so, the $121 figure was dubious, likely combining strike pay and unemployment benefits workers received for only a brief period. *Time* pointed to how the ITU had to threaten to take away strike benefits, at which time “the contract was approved 2,562 to 1,763.” A boxed piece directly below, “$200,000,000 Down the Drain” (1963, p. 80), used figures provided by the two
organizations allied against the workers, the Publishers Association and one of the city's trade groups. The Publishers Association totted up "known overall losses" of $178,900,000. New York's Commerce and Industry Association countered with the whopping figure of $250 million and called it "conservative." As if determined to have the last word, the publishers answered that "the financial setback sustained in the city as a result of the strike is so staggering that it defies any reasonable estimate" ("$200,000,000 Down the Drain," 1963, p. 80).

The piece went on to note how the strike affected the already impoverished: "At least 30 blind dealers have been forced to go on relief. Other retail merchants can only guess what the strike cost." Meanwhile, it repeated that the printers enjoyed "a combination of strike benefits and unemployment insurance that averaged $121 a week" ("$200,000,000 Down the Drain," 1963, p. 80).

The alleged losses were elsewhere given considerable attention. "Though Manhattan's 16-week newspaper strike cost it some $5,000,000 in pre-Christmas revenues," Time reported one month after the strike ended, "the New York Times finished last year in the black, thus preserving a record of annual profits that stretches unbroken back to 1896." Still, because the Times did not put out "its 735,000-circulation New York edition" during the first quarter of 1963, "it suffered a net loss of $4,136,000." ("Striking It Poor," 1963, p. 65). The piece continues,

"Additional revenue must be obtained," said Board Chairman Arthur Hays Sulzberger and Publisher Orvil E. Dryfoos, "to make up for our losses." Which is no news to New Yorkers, who have been paying twice as much (10¢) for the Times ever since its reappearance last month. Some found the nickel boost too much to bear, and some discovered during the 114-day strike that they could live without the Times. The result: circulation last month was down 6.7% from April 1962. ("Striking It Poor," 1963, p. 65)

In contrast to the newsweeklies' assessment, the unions labelled the settlement a success. The ITU deemed the strike a "victory . . . containing all of the fundamental issues for which the strike was called" ("New York Members," 1963, p. 123). Local 6 achieved each of its three demands: 1) A two-year contract and the right to forge contracts apart from a set pattern, 2) guarantees that the union would not lose work to automation and would receive compensation, and 3) a reduction in the work week to 35 hours for a day shift and to 33 and ¾ hours for night workers ("New York Members," 1963, p. 123). In a similar tone, The Guild Reporter pointed to how the remarks of Theodore Kheel, the attorney aiding New York's mayor in negotiations, sharply contrasted with those of the mainstream press:

His conclusion: The strike was not a national catastrophe, it does not signify the collapse of collective bargaining, and no drastic remedies are called for. In short, in Mr. Kheel's considered opinion, there is nothing wrong with collective bargaining in the newspaper industry that more and better collective bargaining can't cure. ("Verdict on New York," 1963, p. 8)

The overstated claims in the aftermath of the strike were further disproved in a report carried months later in the Times. While the newspapers had in fact lost
considerable advertising revenue, the collection of sales tax in New York City for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1963, modestly exceeded the previous year. “The dire predictions about the strike’s effect on business,” New York’s city treasurer remarked, “were not upheld at all. We didn’t have a decrease in the amount of business done” (quoted in “Newspaper Strike Changed Many Habits,” 1963, p. 85). The Columbia study found that newspaper readers had reacted to the strike and shutdown just as the publishers had feared—by picking up newsmagazines and suburban papers or tuning in to broadcast news. By the end of the year, the papers had lost about 400,000 of what circulation officials deemed “marginal” readers, while recovering almost all advertising accounts. The Post, however, because it resumed publication almost four weeks before the standoff ended, was perceived by newspaper peers and advertising clients alike as undermining negotiations. The paper was thus blacklisted by advertisers for at least one year (Powers, 2005).

Labour–management negotiations in New York’s newspaper industry were again strained in 1965, and a strike led by the Guild against the Times resulted in an almost month-long lockout (Tracy, 2004). In 1966, the Herald Tribune, the World-Telegram and Sun, and the Journal American ceased publication after a failed merger between the three. As might have been expected, “The unions were identified as the culprits of the papers’ demise” (Kheel, 2001, p. 42). Having some knowledge of the manoeuvring behind the merger, however, Theodore Kheel concluded that “the real problem stemmed from the absence of sufficient market incentives to invest capital to replace out-dated equipment” (2001, p. 42).

Conclusion
In many ways the newsmagazines’ representation of the 1962-63 New York newspaper strike is similar to that of any other industrial conflict. The union is systematically disparaged, sufficient context and details of deliberations are absent or misrepresented, and the interests of the industry owners are conflated with those of the public (Goldman & Rajagopal, 1991; Martin, 2004; Parenti, 1986; Puette, 1992). Overall, coverage of labour in mainstream outlets has contributed to a broader cultural frame wherein the labour movement is routinely cast as underhanded and corrupt.

Yet representations of newspaper strikes can be distinguished from the discourse about strikes in other industries because they bring together dominant notions of how labour, social class, institutional processes, and mass communication are represented and perceived at a particular historical moment. As one observer explained during a crucial standoff years earlier between the ITU and Chicago’s newspapers, “In the total organized labor picture, the printers are a numerically small group. They are important because they are an essential part of the process of public information and discussion” (Champney, 1948, p. 22). In a similar vein, Raymond Williams (1980) has pointed to the class distinction between newspaper owner and newsworker, which is rooted in a belief that professes “a supposedly permanent division not only of labour but of human status (those who have something to say and those who do not)” (p. 58). According to
Williams, when press workers whose labour power pervades the production of news “assert their presence as more than instrumentality,” they are condemned by the news franchise and, “within bourgeois ideology, as a threat to ‘freedom of the press’” (p. 58). Like the daily press, the newsweeklies acted to restrict and discipline such power by framing the strike as an act carried out by one individual and “his” union against the market economy and the public at large. In this regard, the magazines may have had broader goals. One ITU official observed shortly after the settlement,

There has been evidence for some time that both Time and Newsweek have mounted a crusade to manipulate public opinion toward a hatred of the labor movement and the possible passage by Congress of additional anti-labor legislation. This was the method used to pass both Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin. (Cloud, 1963, p. 168)

Press coverage, then, doubtless figured alongside political design, the heightened automation of printing processes, and the structural consolidation of the newspaper industry. Together these would contribute to diminishing the stature of the ITU as a leading union in the newspaper industry.

The 1962-63 strike remains an important chapter in the Typographical union’s battle for workplace autonomy and rights. The standard record of that struggle examined here suggests a version that, in the long term, proved especially advantageous to the publishing industry. Continued analysis of newspaper unions’ struggles may likewise explain what was at least the facilitative role news coverage played from the late 1940s onward, when legislative measures and automation came together to broadly challenge the workplace autonomy and sheer legality of newworker organization throughout North America.

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