

A STUDY OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*' COVERAGE OF A POETIC RESPONSE TO
THE OCEAN HILL-BROWNSVILLE SCHOOL CONFLICT:
HOW A CONFLICT CAN BE FRAMED BY THE MEDIA

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Master of Arts

by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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presented by Elizabeth Zitron,

a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family who stuck by me
through the thick and thin of this process.
In particular my husband, mother, and father.

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A STUDY OF FRAMING IN THE *NEW YORK TIMES*' COVERAGE OF THE OCEAN
HILL-BROWNSVILLE SCHOOL CONTROVERSY:
HOW CONFLICT OUTCOMES CAN BE SUGGESTED BY THE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of a bitter, three-month-long teachers' strike, a New York City public school teacher read an anti-Semitic poem over the radio that was written by one of his students in response to the impact the strikes had on minority students. The city's wounds had barely healed from the strikes when the poem further escalated the existing conflict. This study explores how the *New York Times* covered the poem by identifying and analyzing the frames used in terms of how they suggested destructive or constructive conflict outcomes to readers. It analyzes newspaper stories and editorials using qualitative content analysis to identify frames, examine language used, sources included and context provided through a conflict theory lens. The findings mainly suggest that overall a destructive outcome was suggested to readers in regards to the conflict over the poem and therefore potentially the long-term outcomes of Ocean Hill-Brownsville. The most common uses of destructive outcome framing include emphasis of Jewish voices over blacks, singling out individual behaviors or voices as representative of a group thereby creating potential bias in readers, and emphasis on blaming.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

“Anti-Semitism”

Dedicated to Albert Shanker

*Hey, Jew boy, with that yarmulke on your head
You pale faced Jew boy- I wish you were dead
I can see you Jew boy- no you can't hide
I got a scoop on you- yeh, you gonna die
I'm sick of your stuff
Every time I turn 'round- you pushin' my head into the ground
I'm sick of hearing about your suffering in Germany
I'm sick about your escape from tyranny
I'm sick of seeing in everything I do
About the murder of 6 million Jews
Hitler's reign lasted for only fifteen years
For that period of time you shed crocodile tears
My suffering lasted for over 400 years, Jew boy
And the white man only let me play with his toys
Jew boy, you took my religion and adopted it for you
But you know that black people were the original Hebrews
When the U.N. made Israel a free independent State
Little four and five-year-old boys threw hand grenades
They hated the black Arabs with all their might
And you, Jew boy, said it was all right
Then you came to America, land of the free
And took over the school system to perpetuate white supremacy
Guess you know, Jew boy, there's only one reason you made it
You had a clean white face, colorless, and faded
I hated you Jew boy, because your hangup was the Torah
And my only hangup was my color.*

Leslie Campbell, an African-American junior high school teacher in Brooklyn, read this poem over the radio at the end of a series of increasingly racially-charged teachers' strikes that focused on whether a local school board in Ocean Hill-Brownsville had the right to fire a unionized teacher. The strikes tore New York City apart and brought schools to a standstill throughout the fall of 1968¹. According to Campbell, an African-American student from his class wrote the poem in response to the negative psychological impact the strikes had on minority students in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Ocean-Hill Brownsville. The strikes had ended two months prior to Campbell's reading of the poem, but bitterness remained in the city among the groups involved, including African-Americans and Jews. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict, a month after the poem incident, landed on the cover of the January 31, 1969 issue of *Time* magazine with the headline: "The Black and the Jew: A Falling out of Allies." The poem seemed to open the city's barely healed wounds and continued to divide New York City.

Campbell claimed his student was responding to an educational system that seemed to cater more to the needs of the ninety-percent white New York City teachers instead of the minority students who made up over fifty-percent of the city's schoolchildren (p. 8). Teachers went on strike three times from September through late October in 1968 to protest whether the largely poor, African-American local school board could fire unionized teachers without the approval of the Board of Education. Each strike

¹ The Ocean-Hill Brownsville school crisis was written about in the national media, but for the most part its impact was limited to New York City. The assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. while significant did not find their ways into the crisis. At most, students in some Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools became upset at news of King's assassination and responded by throwing papers and shouting in hallways after leaving classes unexcused. But there were no riots in NYC schools after his assassination. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy reflected the issues of African-Americans in the United States during this period, but it was a world unto itself at the same time.

increasingly focused on charges of anti-Semitism by the union and charges of racism by the local school board.

The conflict between the Ocean Hill-Brownsville residents and unionized teachers was covered nearly daily by New York City's media outlets, including newspapers such as *The New York Times*. As it continued over the fall of 1968, the conflict transformed from one between the local school board and union teachers to one between the city's African-Americans and Jewish residents (Podair, 2001.) In the shadow of a supposed civil rights coalition between blacks and Jews, the conflict took on the symbolism of the end of an alliance, real or not (Greenberg.) How did *The New York Times* frame the poem, tactic used by a key player in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy in response to a contentious tactic used by the other party and why does that matter?

In covering the strikes and Campbell's reading of the poem, *The New York Times* was criticized at the time for fanning the flames of the conflict. Critics ranged from members of the media such as Fred Ferretti to the players themselves, including Julius Lester. They cited an overdependence on UFT sources, a narrow focus on alleged anti-Semitic and racist tactics employed in the conflict, not presenting both sides of the conflict, and not providing readers with information about the issues surrounding the conflict. Most of these assessments were made while the events of the conflict were still unfolding. They were heated, emotional responses to *The New York Times'* coverage of a heated, emotional conflict that brought issues of race and anti-Semitism to New York City's forefront as race riots exploded in other American cities.

The media can suggest to readers what a conflict is about through framing. It can intimate both the themes of a conflict and the potential outcomes of a conflict. Additionally, when the media covers conflict between minority groups, often different thematic frames are employed in portraying the groups (Rodriguez.) African-Americans are frequently portrayed as “fringe” members of society who refuse to integrate into greater American culture. Jews, on the other hand, are repeatedly portrayed as “model minorities” who have successfully assimilated which has allowed them to achieve the American Dream. These tendencies and the critiques of *The New York Times*’ coverage of the poem warrant a methodical study of how the conflict was portrayed in terms of frames applied and conflict outcomes suggested to readers.

This study will qualitatively analyze coverage of the poem incident to answer the following questions:

R1. Did *The New York Times* suggest to its readers that the conflict escalated by the poem would be resolved destructively or constructively?

R2. Through thematic framing, what did *The New York Times* suggest to its readers the conflict was about?

This study will use Pruitt and Kim’s definition of conflict and their articulation of its mechanics to discuss the conflict between the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school board and the UFT, and *The New York Times*’ coverage of the poem as a tactic employed in this conflict.

While the problems of disputing parties are not the media’s to solve, the media does play a role in how the parties involved in a conflict are viewed by their community,

policy makers and other sources of influence. By choosing what to cover and how, journalists help shape the outcomes of issues (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003).

Background on Ocean Hill-Brownsville School Crisis

Equal educational opportunity had previously been a common cause uniting black parents, civil rights activists, and Jewish allies. In 1955, black parents and their “white (largely Jewish) allies” spearheaded an effort to integrate schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn’s largest black neighborhood (Back, 2001, p. 39). The effort took place on the heels of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a victory won by a team of lawyers including many Jews which was a point of pride for many liberal Jews. Major national Jewish organizations supported the Brooklyn integration effort (p. 41) but Back notes local Jewish support was tepid. Most Jewish support came from teachers living in suburbs or synagogues in other neighborhoods rather than from the mostly Orthodox Jews living in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

The UFT’s predecessor the Teachers Union (TU) strongly supported and advocated for integration beginning with the 1955 effort (Back, p. 55). After the TU was dismantled, the UFT maintained support for integrating New York City’s schools. The loudest dissenting voices came from predominantly Catholic neighborhoods where parents founded grassroots anti-integration groups (Podair, 2002). More importantly, the Board of Education did not take action to support integration on a practical level and so New York City schools continued to operate on a “two-tiered, raced-based school system

in Brooklyn that would lead to the dramatic Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontation,” (Back, p. 58).

Education experts and the Ford Foundation were working with Mayor John Lindsay to improve the dismal performance of minorities in New York City’s schools. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville local school board was an experiment funded by the Ford Foundation which gave communities more control over their neighborhood schools in the hope that such control would improve education for poor minorities. The community elected their own school board, appointed an administrator to oversee the board, and hired principals for already-existing schools in their neighborhoods. Teachers were unionized educators, most of who already worked in the schools.

Unfortunately, “control” was not clearly defined and each side brought their own definition to the table. Teachers saw the local board as partners in making some decisions. The local board saw themselves as in complete control over all decisions including personnel and curriculum. After the first year of the experiment, the neighborhood-led school board dismissed nineteen teachers and administrators whom the board felt did not support the experiment. Most of the dismissed teachers were white and several were Jewish as about two-thirds of New York City’s teachers were Jewish during that time (Podair, p. 15). These dismissals and the local board’s refusal to reinstate the dismissed personnel led to New York City’s longest and most bitter teachers’ strikes, according to Podair (2001).

The conflict escalated with each strike, and with each strike both parties showed a willingness to use harder, ultimately destructive tactics. What could have been a

constructive strike turned ugly because of each side's unwillingness to yield. As the strikes persisted, each side employed increasingly contentious tactics that often focused on the other party's race and/or religion. These tactics transformed the conflict from one between the largely poor, African-American local school board and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) union to one between area Jews and African-Americans. The UFT was viewed by many involved in education at the time, including African-American teachers and the Board of Education, as an organization largely run by Jews because of the large number of Jewish teachers in the New York City school districts (Podair, 2001, p. 1.).

The foundation for the strikes was laid during the summer of 1967 when the local board and teachers met weekly to plan the experimental schools. The local board viewed many existing teachers as ignorant and unresponsive to the needs of poor, minority students. They wanted to hire teachers and principals who would not view students as doomed by nature or their upbringing to fail, according to the local board's administrator, Rhody McCoy (Podair, p. 170.) The board opposed the idea that "white standards" of competition and capitalism be used to judge their students' achievements (p. 170.) They rejected the idea that worthwhile knowledge was found only in books and wanted community members sharing knowledge with students (p 175.) The board wanted teachers who could give their children a "clear sense of black identity" using curriculum that promoted black history, culture, and values (p. 170). Additionally, the local board asked that teachers use disciplinary measures that kept students in classrooms as opposed to suspension and expulsion (p. 177).

The unionized teachers believed that competitive and individualistic values would link students to the established American culture of opportunity and advancement (p. 171). They charged that the Ocean Hill- Brownsville district did not understand that education was meant to instill in a student the “desire to advance by merit,” (p. 172). White teachers increasingly explained African-Americans’ academic performance as a product of the culture of poverty (p. 173) and viewed their job in terms of exposing these students to middle class standards. “We believe that the people of this community are not educated enough to run the schools,” one white Ocean Hill-Brownsville teacher was quoted in the *New York Amsterdam News*, “they must become middle-class before they can participate,” (Podair, p. 173).

Tensions between the unionized teachers and the local board simmered during the summer planning period when the board submitted their own plan for the district to the Ford Foundation that did not include teacher input. Teachers were concerned and angry over a clause that would potentially allow the local board to evaluate teacher performance (Gordon, p. 47). Additionally, the board hired principals who were not on the Board of Examiner’s list of those who qualified for the job, based on the Board of Education’s tracking and merit system for teachers (p. 89). For the local board, the qualifying principal list represented the racial discrimination inherent in the school system as the lists were composed almost entirely of whites (p. 87). The proposal sparked disagreements between the local board and teachers over how the school district should be run (p. 48-49). The 1967/1968 school year began with the board and teachers engaged in conflict over incompatible aspirations for students.

Throughout the 1967/68 school year, the board was dissatisfied with disciplinary measures used by teachers and felt too many students were being suspended. Teachers felt the board pushed for too much control and many were upset that principals not on the merit list were hired (Podair, p. 90). There was a brief citywide teachers strike in September 1967 during which teachers asked for a new contract and a provision allowing them to unilaterally remove seriously misbehaving students from their classrooms and schools (p. 91). Although this was a citywide strike, the board interpreted the strike as directed toward them in particular because of the provision, which went against their belief that students should remain in classrooms (p. 90).

The teachers, backed by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and the local board feuded during the school year over disciplinary and curricular issues. Two-thirds of the teachers requested mid-year transfers which negatively impacted students and remaining teachers. The rocky school year ended with the teacher dismissals. This could have been a constructive tactic for the board to employ and opened the door for badly needed social change for the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community. However, the board's unwillingness to yield their position when the UFT pushed back with strikes forced them and their supporters to often employ ultimately destructive tactics. The UFT matched them with equally destructive and hard tactics. It is often hard to untangle the narrative to determine if stakeholders were initiating tactics or employing them in response to the other side. What is clear in the narrative is that this conflict ultimately resulted in destructive outcomes for all involved.

For 40 years, the UFT gained strength as an organization with real influence over the lives of teachers. The UFT won teachers the right to negotiate contracts, to enjoy job security, and to have a voice in developing school policies and teacher evaluation criteria (Podair, 2002). In the eyes of teachers, the protections they won represented equal protection for all (Podair, 2001, p. 9). Under the leadership of UFT president Albert Shanker, the teachers demanded the reinstatement of the dismissed Ocean Hill-Brownsville school teachers. The dismissals symbolized the struggles they had fought for control over their professional lives.

For the Ocean Hill-Brownsville residents and school board, the right to dismiss teachers seen as ineffective, unresponsive to student needs, and out of touch with the realities of poverty embodied the promise of the experiment: control over their lives and the lives of their children (Gordon). They wanted teachers who would use more African-American-centered curriculum and employ disciplinary means that kept students in classrooms. They hoped to increase the presence of minority teachers. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville parents wanted to enjoy the same influence over their children's educations which they saw their white, suburban counterparts enjoy.

In response to the board's refusal to reinstate the teachers, the UFT held three citywide strikes during September, October, and November of 1968. On September 9, 1968, 54,000 of the city's 57,000 teachers walked out to support the dismissed teachers (Podair, 2002, p. 115). They agreed to return on September 11 after the Board of Education ordered the reinstatement of the dismissed teachers, but walked out again on

September 13, once it became clear that the Board could not enforce this decision. This second strike lasted two weeks until teachers returned to work on September 30 (p. 122).

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville school board refused to budge and held classes throughout the strikes, hiring new teachers to cross the picket lines. Roughly seventy percent of the new teachers were white and fifty percent were Jewish (Gordon, p. 80). Striking teachers yelled racial epithets and threats at scab teachers. Ocean Hill-Brownsville supporters employed similar tactics. When the dismissed teachers were returned to the experimental district by the Board of Education after the second strike they were greeted by about fifty community residents brandishing sticks and bandoliers of bullets (p. 117). According to Shanker in a piece he wrote shortly after the strike ended, the returning teachers were told “they would be killed if they did not leave the district”, a “terrorism prearranged by McCoy and others” (1969, p. 437). Teachers, students, and parents on both sides reported harassment and threats by the other (Podair.) As the conflict escalated, it made front-page news nearly every day.

After the second strike, when the dismissed teachers were reinstated, altercations broke out both inside and outside of Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools between teachers, students, UFT supporters, and residents (Podair, 2002, p. 122). Non-union teachers shunned the reinstated teachers who were given lunchroom and recess duty. In response, the Board of Education closed all Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools and ordered the local board to give the union teachers teaching assignments. The local board refused and rather than keep the schools closed, the Board of Education reopened them. The UFT responded

by voting for a third strike on October 9, the same day the Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools reopened.

The third strike lasted five weeks and personified the contending strategy each side employed in the conflict. Each side used increasingly race-or-religious-centered tactics to stand their ground. [OK] The most cited examples are the anti-Semitic letters anonymously circulated in teacher mailboxes across New York City. Many approvingly quoted from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, but the most notorious was the following unsigned letter circulated at an Ocean Hill-Brownsville middle school:

If African American History and Culture is to be taught to our Black Children it Must be Done By African Americans who Identify With And Who Understand The Problem. It is Impossible For The Middle East Murderers of Colored People to Possibly Bring To This Important Task The Insight, The Concern, The Exposing Of The Truth That is a Must If The Years Of Brainwashing And Self-Hatred That Has Been Taught To Our Black Children By Those Bloodsucking Exploiters and Murderers Is To Be Over Come. The Idea Behind This Program Is Beautiful, But When The Money Changers Heard About It, They Took Over, As Is Their Custom In The Black Community, If African American History and Culture Is Important To Our Children To Raise Their Esteem Of Themselves, They Are The Only Persons Who Can Do The Job Are African-American Brothers And Sisters, And Not the So-Called Liberal Jewish Friend. We Know From His Tricky, Deceitful Maneuvers That He is Really Our Enemy and He is Responsible For The Serious Educational Retardation Of Our Black Children. We Call On All Concerned Black Teachers, Parents, And

Friends to Write To The Board of Education, To the Mayor, To The State
Commissioner of Education To Protest The Take Over Of This Crucial Program By
People Who Are Unfit By Tradition And By Inclination To Do Even An Adequate
Job. (Podair, 2001, p. 124.)

Forty-percent of the teachers in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district signed an ad in the *New York Times* disavowing the letter (p. 124). Later investigations into the origins of the letter found potential links to UFT supporters (Ferretti). Shanker distributed 500,000 copies of the letter throughout New York City. The contents caused uproar within the city and into the suburbs, where many Jews had fled during the 1950s. Mayor John Lindsay found himself booed off the stage more than once while visiting with Jewish constituents, for example (Ferretti). Shanker used the letter throughout the third strike to paint Ocean Hill-Brownsville residents and supporters as anti-Semites. He refused to budge from this position, using the letter as reason why the Board of Education and Mayor's Office should not bow to the local school board. Shanker accused the local board of dismissing the teachers in the first place to incite a confrontation in order to "test whether they had total control, and also because they felt by creating a *racial* confrontation they could mobilize community support behind them" (Shanker, 1969, p. 436). Additionally, he appealed to the state senate asking them to weigh in on the definition of "community control," a move he promised not to make (p. 134).

Shanker and the UFT were backed by significant allies including the NAACP, American Jewish Congress, and prominent civil rights activists Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph (Gordon). Shanker had participated in civil rights activities in the 1950s

and early 1960s, a fact he often mentioned to the media and in speeches (ibid.) Previous civil rights activism was often cited by UFT teachers and liberal Jewish organizations as reason for feeling betrayed by the teacher dismissals and anti-Semitic sentiments (Podair, 2002).

The presence of UFT supporters like Rustin and Randolph at rallies and in the media was not lost on Ocean Hill-Brownsville supporters. McCoy had been a student of Malcolm X and the African-American organization most closely aligned with Ocean Hill-Brownsville was the African-American Teachers Association, considered a fringe element by the UFT. The local board also brought a band of elite supporters to the conflict including the Ford Foundation, Board of Education administrators, Mayor Lindsay, and other local and state politicians who hoped to avoid the rioting plaguing other American cities.

Out on the streets, picketers from both sides carried racially-charged signs such as teachers protesting “Stop Teaching Race Hatred to Children” and “End Mob Rule in Schools” (Podair, 2002). Shanker frequently used the word “extremists” in writings, speeches, and in press interviews to describe McCoy, the local board, and Ocean Hill-Brownsville residents (Ferretti). Most often epithets and threats were hurled from each side on the picket lines. Shanker insisted anti-Semitism lurked behind Ocean Hill-Brownsville classroom doors and claimed the scab teachers were preaching Black Power. Unfortunately McCoy himself never publicly denounced any of the anti-Semitism that crept into use by supporters. He defended this by saying he had much more important concerns, such as the education of the young people of his school district (Podair).

Neither side made any distinct move to combat the racism and anti-Semitism that permeated the strikes except for the *Times* ad taken out by some of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers.

The local press including the *New York Times* reported on a few, isolated incidents of violence that increased tensions because they were tied to the school controversy. A rash of Brooklyn synagogue burnings in early 1969, for instance, originally attributed to black militants, turned out to have been perpetrated by whites, including some Jews (Kihss, 1969, para. 26).

The strike finally ended in mid-November. It took until March 1969 to reinstate the teachers, most of whom left Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools at the end of the school year (Podair, 2002, p. 142). According to Podair influential African-American teachers, such as Leslie Campbell, “retreated behind a wall of racial separatism” (p. 142) and less than half of the replacement teachers returned the next year. McCoy continued to fight for the separatism of Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools and refused to have students take standardized tests, for example (Podair). Shanker’s tactic of taking the definition of “community control” to the state legislature deeply impacted Ocean Hill-Brownsville. The schools were under the control of the Board of Education until the state ruled against decentralization in April 1969. While McCoy tried his best to buck the Board rule, it eventually worked against him. The school experiment was officially dismantled by the start of the 1970 school year.

Shanker claimed he would do it all over again and in the same manner; the victory was worth the prices paid (Podair, 2002, p. 145-146). McCoy left Ocean Hill-Brownsville

in 1971 and with the support of the Ford Foundation and influential players in higher education earned a Ph.D. in Education (ibid.) He wrote his dissertation on the experiment and wrote occasionally on the experiment for education publications. While Shanker enjoyed continued success as a public figure and advocate of teachers, McCoy eventually faded from the public eye. In fact, scholars such as Gordon and Podair in researching this conflict were unable to track McCoy after the 1970s.

The strikes created lasting divisions in New York City, according to Podair. He states that the long, nasty third strike banded Catholics and Jews together in ways unseen previously (2002, p. 123). Teachers suddenly depended on the mostly Irish Catholic police to protect them on picket lines and in schools. Poor blacks in Ocean Hill-Brownsville found themselves aligned with WASP supporters such as Mayor John Lindsay, McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation, and Board of Education administrators (Podair, 2001). Many Jews in the suburbs and the city alike were disappointed in how Lindsay handled alleged incidents of anti-Semitism, including the letter and poem incidents.

The effects were captured in a poll conducted by Louis Harris & Associates immediately after the strikes (Podair, 2002, p. 126). New York City's Jews favored the UFT in the dispute 63 percent while white Catholics favored the UFT by 48 percent. African-Americans supported McCoy and the Ocean Hill local board 50 percent. More significantly, Jews believed that blacks preached anti-Semitism during the dispute 66 percent while white Catholics believed the same 40 percent. Conversely African-Americans believed anti-Semitism was not an issue in the strikes by 40 percent. "Seven

out of ten Jews, Italians and Irish in New York City,” Harris concluded, “have clearly joined common cause,” (p. 126).

Ocean Hill-Brownsville was meaningful for many liberal Jews at the time, particularly in New York City, because it signified “the end of an era” for them (Greenberg). According to Kaufman, liberal Jews stung by Ocean Hill-Brownsville began distancing themselves from the Civil Rights Movement they had previously enthusiastically supported (1997, p. 117). Kaufman describes the conflict as one over competing views of affirmative action. Jews worried about quotas and saw the UFT as a democratic, merit-based system in which all could achieve. African-Americans saw the community control experiment as a real chance to level the playing field (p. 115).

Some Jews like Ira Glasser, head of the New York Civil Liberties Union, blamed Shanker for “whipping up the anti-Semitism issue” (Greenberg, p. 231). And Julius Lester characterized the conflict, “This issue is what it has always been: racism,” (ibid.) Whether anti-Semitism and racism sentiments in the conflict are exaggerated or not, states Greenberg, what remains are “images of African-American residents and Jewish union members screaming at each other across the barricades” which “epitomized to many the then-current state of black-Jewish relations” (2006, p. 231).

For many Jews at the time and for many Jewish scholars writing later on Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the poem read by Campbell represents the worst incident of anti-Semitism from the strikes. Although the incident took place on December 26, 1968, over a month after the strikes ended, it symbolizes the bitter and fractured state of the city. The responses to the poem, covered extensively by the media including the *New York Times*,

embody the turmoil between African-Americans, Jews, their supporters, and politicians stemming from the strikes.

Campbell had been invited to lead a discussion about black anti-Semitism on Julius Lester's WBAI radio show *The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution*. Lester's show usually featured guests discussing issues of the day in the "spirit of liberal dialogue," (Gordon, p. 89.) Lester asked Campbell to read a poem written by student in response to the strikes. Campbell initially refused, but Lester said he hoped it could cause people to "do some self-examination," (Ferretti, p. 29.) "Anti-Semitism" was the poem read.

WBAI-FM was, and is, part of the Pacifica radio family which was established in 1946 by pacifists to promote peace and the nonviolent movement. The station was known as the voice of the counterculture during the 1960s (Land, 1997.) Average weekly audience figures for 1968 are estimated at 600,000 listeners (Land, 1997) and the station enjoyed great financial and volunteer support, even after the incident.

An on-air, live discussion immediately followed the reading. Lester said he asked Campbell to read the poem "in the full knowledge, of course, that probably one half of WBAI's subscribers will immediately cancel their subscriptions to the station," (Ferretti, p. 28.) Lester acknowledged the poem was "an ugly poem" but "not on half as ugly as what happened in school strikes," (p. 29.) Lester said he hoped the poem would cause people to "do some self-examination" and begin questioning how the strikes were negatively affecting black children (ibid.)

Lester replayed the broadcast a week later and invited callers to further discuss the poem and strikes. "Most of the callers identified themselves as Jews, and no one

protested the airing of the poem,” he recalled at the Conference on Black and Jewish Relations in 1985. While the poem disturbed his listeners, “no one accused me of anti-Semitism.” He aired the poem again, took phone calls, and found the response was the same. Lester recalled the poem received no media attention until January 15, 1969 when the UFT filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission against WBAI for airing the poem. The only newspaper that contacted Lester for his side of the story was the *New York Post* (Lester.)

This specific incident is repeatedly mentioned in works on Jewish/black relations in the United States as emblematic of the crumbling of whatever coalition Jews and African-Americans previously had in the twentieth century. What made this incident and Ocean Hill-Brownsville overall so bitter, according to Jonathan Kaufman, was that blacks and Jews “had once been joined in an alliance,” (p. 155.) Kaufman claims that blacks saw Jews as different from other whites and expected more of them. Jews once “supported the black freedom struggles and provided much of the money, legal advice, and press coverage,” (ibid.) Now, many Jews were on the other side. “The sound heard in New York in 1968 and 1969 was the sound of a coalition ripping itself apart,” (ibid.)

After the poem, for most Jews the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict was about “either anti-Semitism or anti-white sentiment, with Jews, as usual, the victims,” according to historian Cheryl Greenberg (p. 231.) After Ocean Hill-Brownsville and the poem incident, according to Murray Friedman, “the Jewish community felt a mingled sense of panic, confusion, and outrage at these manifestations of hostility,” (p. 263). To prove his point, Friedman pointed to the rise of Jewish neo-conservatism during this time (p. 266).

Jewish intellectuals such as Earl Raab and Norman Podhoretz repeatedly pointed to Ocean Hill-Brownsville and the poem as exemplifying what they viewed as a radical black power movement pervasive in African-American communities (p. 267.)

In reading articles or watching television reports, media consumers are viewing a “first draft of history,” (Christians, 1986, p. 125.) “Because first drafts directly influence the final statement, press portrayals feed into public discourse and play a portentous role in the shape our culture and sociopolitical realm ultimately take,” according to Christians (p. 125.) Attention should be paid as to how conflicts are recorded in the media as primary source documents.

How the media covers conflict is important at the time of the events and examining that coverage offers important historical perspective. The media, through framing, helps both the public and policy makers view the interests involved in conflict (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999; Entman, 2004) and how to view the stakeholders, their aspirations and the context of the conflict (Gitlin, 1980). Frames help tell readers when an issue has been resolved (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). In light of these ideas, Reuben offers, “it suggests that news coverage of conflict may contribute to constructive or destructive outcomes of those disputes” (2010, p. 47).

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict received continued media coverage at the time. It is still revisited, especially when New York’s African-American and Jewish communities clash, such as during the Crown Heights incident. “The Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict is important less for the scope of its consequences than for the fact that, in media-saturated New York City, it assumed at the time, and has assumed since,

an inordinate symbolic power,” according to Sundquist (2005, p. 344.)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the *New York Times* framed a tactic used by a key player in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy in response to a contentious tactic used by the other party. Les Campbell, an Ocean Hill-Brownsville junior high teacher, read the poem “Anti-Semitism” written by one of his students over the radio. According to Campbell, the student dedicated the poem to UFT president Albert Shanker. Campbell decided to read in response to what he viewed as hard tactics employed by Shanker, who was allegedly inciting his constituency by sharing anti-Semitic literature supposedly distributed by African-American supporters of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school board.

This study will examine how frames used by the *New York Times* in covering this incident may have helped inflame or calm the conflict between blacks and Jews, potentially promoting constructive or destructive escalation. In particular, this study will note if underlying issues beneath the conflict are addressed during the course of the coverage. As noted by Reuben, “if issues of power or individual or collective identity” lie beneath a conflict and are not adequately addressed, “the ingredients remain for the outbreak of future dispute,” (p. 54.)

This study will aim to answer two questions. Did *The New York Times* suggest to its readers that the conflict spurred by the poem would resolve destructively or

constructively for the warring parties? Through thematic framing, what did *The New York Times* suggest to the readers the conflict was about?

The researcher expects to find that the paper suggested overall a destructive outcome for the parties. In examining how the media covers conflicts, Young found a “cultivated preference of both the media and the public for good-guy, bad-guy stories.” This preference, he states, can result in more attention to destructive and negative conflict coverage. Based on initial reads of the coverage, it is expected that *The New York Times* will frame the conflict as about racism and anti-Semitism stemming from Ocean Hill-Brownsville’s school crisis.

Editors and reporters decide what stories to tell, how to tell them and which voices reflect those stories. In making those decisions, the press, through framing and defining a story, can create symbols of meaning for readers (McQuail, 2005, p. 464). The narrative in which facts are presented through media frames can determine the story told (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). In studying the framing of political issues, Jamieson & Waldman determined that by deciding what to cover and how, the media can shape issue outcomes (p. 95).

The media can influence reader thoughts and feelings on issues (Valkenburg, Semetko, & De Vreese, 1999; Jamieson & Waldman; Evans, 2010), exert influence on policy and policy makers (Domke, Watts, Shah, & Fan, 1999) and assign responsibility for issues in readers’ minds (Iyengar, 1990). Because of these potential impacts, communities are better served by coverage of conflicts that is constructive and leads to effective resolution (Reuben, 2010).

The news cycle is driven by competition, time and space constraints, and newsroom norms which can result in overdependence on official sources, exclusion of the greater context of a conflict, and other potential contributors to destructive conflict escalation. However many journalists move beyond such constraints and expectations in an effort to provide constructive conflict coverage. In covering conflict, such as the one in Northern Ireland, some journalists have employed reporting techniques that facilitated constructive communication between warring parties and pressured parties to continue to pursue peaceful resolution (Reuben, p. 59).

A socially responsible press must “present a representative picture of society’s various groups” according to the Hutchins Commission (p. 2) and provide a voice to those who do not have one (Christians, 1986). Such reporting values as called for by the Hutchins Commission are a vehicle for constructive conflict coverage. They call for not inflaming conflict or allowing majority party voices to speak and therefore direct framing.

Rationale

This study will refine existing knowledge on the media coverage of the black/Jewish-centered events that resulted from the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community school crisis, and the poem, specifically. While some researchers have examined news media coverage to understand the narrative of the conflict, none have attempted to determine how the interests of the stakeholders were portrayed and pursued in media coverage of the poem

incident. In particular, this study will examine how those portrayals might have suggested constructive or destructive outcomes for the conflict.

The poem has taken on significance in scholarship about both Ocean Hill-Brownsville and black/Jewish relations in the United States. At the time, it was singled out by *Time Magazine* in their cover story on the “falling out of allies” as representational of black anti-Semitism, which was supposedly growing at the time. The incident is used to symbolize growing (negative) black power and the “kicking out” of Jews from the civil rights movements, where they were previously embraced. How this incident was framed by the *Times*, creator of heavily-used and -read primary source documents from the time, deserves examination.

The *New York Times* will be studied for two reasons. First, it was specifically criticized at the time for unfair, imbalanced coverage that fanned the flames of the conflict (Booth, 1969; Vorspan, 1969; Ferretti, 1969; Lester, 1969). The *Times* was singled out for overuse of official sources from the UFT (Ferretti), not presenting both sides (Lester, Booth), and an overblown focus on alleged anti-Semitic events rather than the overall issue at hand (Vorspan). It was also one of three papers cited for simplifying issues as black power takeovers (Urban reporting).

Judge William H. Booth, Chairman of the New York City Commission on Human Rights in 1969, left his post after the New York Board of Rabbis put considerable pressure on him for displaying “singular insensitivity to anti-Semitic incidents” that took place during the strikes (Booth, 1969, p. 116-119.) He criticized the press for not presenting the African-American side of the conflict as fully as the white side (p. 120.)

Regarding coverage of his own story, Booth says those leading the charge against him were given “the full profile treatment by the *New York Times*,” while his answers to the charges against him were given “short shrift,” (p. 120.)

Albert Vorspan was Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism during the strikes and often quoted by the media as a representative of the Jewish community. In his examination of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict, criticized the media coverage of anti-Semitic tactics used by both sides. “The sober *New York Times* and the television news broadcasts seemed bent on inflating each of these firecrackers into a cannon blast,” he wrote of media coverage on tactics such as anti-Jewish sentiments shouted across picket lines and Shanker’s distribution of anti-Semitic literature in an alleged attempt to incite his supporters (1969, p. 196.)

As a prestige paper, the *Times* is expected to set the media agenda (Li & Liu, 2010) and provide unbiased coverage on a controversial event (Lacy, Fico, & Simon, 1991). Gitlin says it has the best claim as both the national newspaper and the newspaper of record (1980b, p. 299). Journalists, he goes on to say, believe its reports to be “fair” and “reliable” (ibid.) Many decision-makers at news outlets regularly “clip the *Times* for leads to stories (p. 300). The *Times* sets agendas both politically and for other media (p. 301). Further, McQuail says that authoritative sources such as the *New York Times* are relatively more effective at conveying messages to readers (2005, p. 471).

This study will aid historians who would use *New York Times* coverage in telling the story of blacks, Jews and Ocean Hill-Brownsville. It also addresses the critics of the *New York Times* who claim the paper did not present the African-American side as fully as the

white side, focused on negative aspects and destructive tactics, and overused official sources and militant individuals. Further, this study will provide “hindsight” to current journalists. By methodically examining newspaper coverage that was harshly criticized at the time for fanning flames, we can uncover ways in which the media destructively or constructively covers conflict escalation.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Understanding Conflict: A model of conflict

Pruitt and Kim's model of conflict is used to discuss the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school crisis and the poem. The crisis is viewed as a conflict from this model and the poem is a tactic employed by one side in response to the conflict. They define conflict as a perceived divergence of interest between two parties (2004, p. 7-8). The focus is on the divergence of aspirations and interests. Interests are the needs, desires and concerns of the parties while aspirations are into what their interests are translated (p. 16). Conflict is a belief that the two parties' current aspirations are incompatible (p. 8). In addressing a conflict, parties choose from four strategies: contending, avoiding, yielding, or problem-solving. The strategy chosen determines the tactics, the classes of moves by which the strategy is enacted.

As seen in the case of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, use of a contending strategy can lead to a circular escalation pattern in which heavier tactics are increasingly used (Pruitt & Kim, p. 93.) For example, neither party would yield their position in the conflict. The UFT insisted the dismissed teachers be reinstated; McCoy and the local board refused to allow them to return. Such a strategy can create a vicious circle (p. 96) that is hard to stop once started because each party sees failure to respond as a sign of weakness and inviting further annoyances from the other party (p. 97.)

The second and third strike demonstrate the contending strategy Shanker and the UFT employed. When the local board refused to reinstate the teachers even after ordered to by the Board of Education, Shanker called for the strikes. When forced to allow the dismissed teachers back in, McCoy and the local board applied their contending strategy through tactics such as refusing teacher assignments and keeping the teachers in a lunchroom with area residents bearing bandoliers. Because each side refused to back away from their strategy, they had to use increasingly more contentious tactics in order to remain firm. Shanker's distribution to his constituents of anti-Semitic material purportedly created by Ocean Hill-Brownsville supporters and Campbell's choice to read the poem on the air are tactics that reflect neither side's willingness to back away from a contending strategy.

The outcome of Ocean Hill-Brownsville is decidedly negative as portrayed in both the press and scholarship. However conflict is not inherently destructive to the clashing parties. It can have positive outcomes including nourishing social change (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 10-11). Constructive functions of conflict can also include the reconciliation of people's legitimate interests (p. 10) and unifying groups through common cause such as rebuilding (p. 11). Conversely, destructive conflicts can leave "ruined relationships, devastation and more conflict in their wake," (Reuben, p. 46).

The Black/Jewish "alliance"

Numerous scholars (Greenberg, 2006; Salzman and West, 1997; Friedman, 1995; J. Kaufman, 1988; Hentoff, 1969; Weisbord and Stein, 1970) have attempted to dissect how

Jews and African-Americans converged politically, socially and culturally on the American landscape over the past century. Scholars of black-Jewish relations debate how “natural” this alliance was and if it could even be called an alliance. In examining the history of black-Jewish engagement in the United States, scholars such as Cheryl Greenberg, Murray Friedman, Jonathan Kaufman, and Jerald Podair agree the inevitable divisions of “class, race, religion, historical experience, and access to white privilege” that existed between African-Americans and Jews came to a head in the turbulent late 1960s in conflicts like Ocean Hill-Brownsville (Greenberg, p.252). These conflicts often centered on issues such as affirmative action and the movement to decrease white involvement in black civil rights issues (Kaufman.)

In examining black-Jewish engagement in the United States, Cheryl Greenberg provides the framework of exploring formal coalition-building between black and Jewish organizations set against the background of informal, individual relations between blacks and Jews. Throughout the twentieth-century, when most coalition-building took place, the two groups came into increasing formal and informal contact with each other. This interaction prompted awareness of each other’s difficulties set against their own (p. 10.)

In looking at formal engagement, Greenberg claims organizational coalition-building took place between liberal organizations. Greenberg states that African Americans and Jewish Americans have “long been America’s quintessential liberals...because of their deep commitment to what they understand to be its tenets: cultural pluralism individual equality, and the obligation of the state to protect and extend both,” (p. 8.) She

acknowledges this is not universally true, but appropriate for dissecting black-Jewish engagement in the United States.

Significant informal connections were made between blacks and Jews when Southern blacks migrated north from 1890-1920 (Greenberg, p. 18.) Blacks usually moved into neighborhoods abandoned by upwardly-mobile eastern European immigrant Jews who continued to manage stores and apartments in those areas (Weiss, 1997, p. 124.) It was mostly Jews who played daily roles in the lives of African-Americans from sympathetic landlord to slumlord; storeowners who would give credit or shopkeepers with pricy, shoddy goods. Jews stood in for whites as a whole in these relationships (Greenberg).

While blacks and Jews navigated their growing informal engagements, liberal organizations, such as the NAACP, the American Jewish Congress, and several Jewish and African-American women's organizations, made tentative steps towards each other during the 1920s and 1930s (Greenberg). For example some liberal African-American organizations like the NAACP had prominent Jews on the board and received financial and legal aid from some Jews. The National Association of Colored Women and National Conference of Jewish Women cosponsored conferences in 1920s on racism and Jewish women's groups worked with African-American women's groups to promote passing anti-lynching laws, among other partnerships (p. 42). But, overall, Jewish and black groups did not work with each other. Each group focused on their own goals and difficulties (p. 58-59.) American Jewish publications in both Yiddish and English, took a more active stance by decrying racism, specifically lynchings, since the beginning of the twentieth century (Diner, 2004, p. 266.)

On an organizational level, Jews and blacks continued to protect their own interests in during World War II. Blacks focused on equal employment and education efforts while American Jews were mainly concerned with Nazi Germany. Their interpersonal relations remained much the same. The American Jewish Congress calculated that up to half of all buildings in Harlem were Jewish-owned (Greenberg, p. 59.) Both Jewish and black organizations called for urban Jewish landlords and storeowners to improve services to African-Americans. James Baldwin's "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White," published in the *New York Times* in 1967, encapsulated the way many urban, northern African-Americans felt about the Jewish landlords, merchants, and teachers with whom they interacted. Baldwin states that Jews are singled out "not because he acts differently from other white men, but because he doesn't."

Contentious, financially-based informal relations would remain an issue between blacks and Jews. Jews continued to stand in for whites in the minds of blacks when they began to enter the teaching and social work professions in large numbers in the late 1940s and early 1950s in large northern cities. According to Bayard Rustin, if you happen to be an uneducated, poorly trained Negro living in the ghetto, you see only four kinds of white people- the policeman, the businessman, the teacher and the welfare worker. In many cities, three of those four are Jewish (*Time*, 1969.)

Jewish and African-American organizations built a more formal coalition through out the 1940s and 1950s based on overlapping interests to desegregate housing, employment, and education (Greenberg, p. 124). For example, Jewish agencies such as the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and the Jewish War Veterans all shared

information with and offered legal advice to the NAACP when it brought cases before the Supreme Court against restrictive housing covenants (Greenberg, 1997, p. 160.) Black and Jewish agencies cooperated on state and local levels to try to convince employers to stop requesting race and religion on job applications (p. 161.) The NAACP board of directors and Legal Defense Fund were peppered with Jews including Jack Greenberg who argued the *Brown v. Board of Education* case on behalf of the NAACP (Kaufman, p. 87.) During this time Jewish and black organizations focused their individual and shared efforts in the courtroom (Kaufman.)

During the post- World War II era, liberal, mostly Reform synagogues and liberal Jewish organizations, such as the Zionist group Hadassah, became actively engaged in the Civil Rights movement (Diner, p. 266.) Rabbis preached support for civil rights from the pulpit and sometimes called for participation in the movement (p. 267.) According to Diner, Jews saw themselves as “shareholders in the moral crusade of the 1950s and 1960s” (p. 267). Many synagogues organized groups of delegates to lobby on behalf of school integration. Support came from all branches of Judaism including the Orthodox sects (p. 268.)

The battleground for black civil rights moved from the courtroom to the street with the entrance of young, vibrant leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Jews were worried about picketing and the call for more direct action, but when it came down to it, most would agree to such “militant” action (Greenberg, 1997, p. 166.) In the late 1950s, young, northern, urban Jews began participating in mass individual action such as picketing and sit-ins (Kaufman, 1997, p. 109-111.) A certain type of Jew growing up in

northern cities, says Kaufman, would have been influenced by “the talk of socialism and equality that blew all around,” (p. 109.) According to Kaufman, this group of young was raised with the idea that “Blacks were objects of sympathy rather than hate, potential allies rather than foes, people who could be helped and who could make Jews feel good for having helped them,” (p. 109.)

The Freedom Rides of 1961 and Freedom Summer from 1961-1964 are viewed by Murray Friedman as the heyday of Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement. The *American Jewish Yearbook* reported in 1964 that Jewish students made up one-third to one-half of the young whites who traveled south to participate in Freedom Summer (Diner, p. 268.) Jonathan Kaufman even asserts that well over half the white students working south during Freedom Summer were Jewish (1988, p. 19). Although his statistics are disputed, Salzman (1997), Schultz, (2001) and Greenberg (2006) agree Jews (though perhaps not self-identified and a certain kind of predominately young, activist, well-educated Jew from northern cities) made up a noticeable presence in the civil rights struggle during this time and place.

During Freedom Summer, tensions emerged between “northern, generally better educated but often paternalistic whites and veteran southern black activists” (Greenberg, 2006, p. 157.) Reminiscent of the tensions between northern, urban African-Americans and Jews, they point again to the undercurrents of class between the two groups. In particular, southern blacks were upset at the media attention the movement received when whites came south and in particular when white, Jewish workers Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were murdered along with African-American James Chaney (p.

175). Greenberg writes that as the dust of the 1950s and mid-1960s settled with many great legal and legislative battles won, “tensions replaced joint civil rights projects at center stage” (p. 214).

Identity politics took center stage for African-Americans in the 1960s (“Black Power”) over the pluralism of years past preached by King. African-Americans began identifying with Palestinians, for example, as oppressed minorities (Weisbord and Stein, p. 109). Interests and concerns diverged as African-Americans fought for affirmative action and Jews cringed, recalling days of quotas (J. Kaufman, 1988, p. 117).

Greenberg asserts that “Jews committed to black equality more fully and for longer time than any other white group but were also white people with white attitudes” (p. 118). And though legal battles were won during the “golden era,” the fact remained that racism was institutionalized in the United States. “Anti-Negroism was historically rooted in the belief of Negro racial inferiority;” wrote Harold Cruse in 1969, “anti-Semitism was never rooted in the notion of Jewish racial inferiority” (p. 172). Further, African-Americans were becoming increasingly annoyed and upset by the Jewish belief they were “in the same boat” (p. 172). “How could Negroes and Jews be in the “same boat” when there were many Jews rich enough and powerful enough politically to bestow philanthropy on Negroes?” asked Cruse (p. 172).

Many of the issues that African-Americans and Jews began diverging over in the mid-1960s, such as affirmative action, black power, black anti-Semitism, Jewish patronage and power, came together in the event that has taken on symbolism as seminal in the fraying of black-Jewish coalition. Greenberg, Kaufman, Friedman, and Podair

agree that the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy brought to the surface underlying issues of class and white privilege that had always been simmering between blacks and Jews, even during times of cooperation based on shared interests.

Media coverage of the black/Jewish conflict during Ocean Hill-Brownsville

In his examination of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville crisis Jerald Podair concluded that the mainstream media including *The New York Times* embraced community control (p. 40) to such a degree that the UFT members picketed its offices in the fall of 1968 in response to what they perceived was the paper's anti-union sentiment (p. 126.)

“Community control was an issue almost tailor-made for a media corps hostile to bureaucratic sloth and institutional arrogance, traits with the Board of Education appeared to possess in abundance,” wrote Podair about the coverage by mainstream media at the time (p. 41). He relays an article published in the UFT's newspaper *United Teacher* that warned teachers, “(L)isten to the radio, read our ‘free’ press, watch your TV screens. They are all against us” (as cited p. 126). The article appeared on November 20, 1968 in the midst of the third, most vicious strike.

The role of the media in exacerbating the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school crisis is debated. Some view the media as pawns in Shanker's game or as exacerbating Jewish alarm (Ferretti, 1969; Booth, 1969; Vorspan, 1969) while some felt the media supported the local community-controlled (and largely African-American) school board (Podair, 2002). The media contributed to the symbolic meanings assigned to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict (Sundquist, 2005). Its power, reach, and presence had, and have, an

undeniable influence on readers' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the nature of the conflict, the strategies employed, and the tactics used by stakeholders.

Ferretti, writing shortly after the official strike ended but while the city was still reeling and recovering, explores chronologically Shanker's "campaign to discredit the experiment in education" (1969, p. 19). Without applying a formal method of analysis, Ferretti chooses particular articles and television broadcasts that exemplify the manipulation he claims Shanker employed. Ferretti highlights inflammatory quotes from Shanker in the *New York Times*, in particular, and on television shows such as *Searchlight*.

Ferretti asserts the press gave scant attention to attempts by other parties to introduce other pieces of information or other voices in the discussion on black anti-Semitism and community control. There was, he writes, "no real effort made to present the black man's side of the conflict" (p. 28).

In making his argument, Ferretti refers to an informal study conducted by the New School called "Community Reaction to Media Coverage of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis." The report presented opinions on the coverage of the 1968 strike from Ocean Hill residents and community participants in the school controversy (Urban reporting, 1969, p. 9). The reporter found that there was a far greater variety of reaction to the media coverage than one would have supposed, that "there was no monolithic community reaction." The study also reports an over-reliance on the part of mainstream media in presenting the side of the local school board as a black power takeover.

Judge William H. Booth, former Chair of the city's Commission on Human Rights, complained about the *New York Times* coverage involving a controversy that occurred toward the tail end of the strikes, but which was connected with them because of fears of black anti-Semitism. An essay written by a teen girl for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Harlem on my Mind" exhibit was edited such that problematic quotes about Jews and blacks were attributed to her. Rather, they were taken from *Beyond the Melting Pot* by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan. The *New York Times*, he says reported on the "offensiveness" of the exhibit on the front-page but when the editing came to light, it was relegated to the obituary pages (1969, p. 120).

Gordon reported that the ad the local governing board took out over the pamphlets Shanker distributed to the UFT was not widely reported and "it was still rather limited in comparison to the press given to Jewish outrage over the contents of the pamphlets" (p. 81). Regarding the charges of black anti-Semitism on the part of the UFT, including the anonymous pamphlet incident, "(t)he *New York Times* and the television news broadcasts seemed bent on inflating each of these firecrackers into a cannon blast" Vorspan writes (1969, p. 196).

When Leslie Campbell read his student's poetry on Julius Lester's show on December 26, 1968, Lester fielded calls on the program. He claims he did not adopt pro or con stance about black anti-Semitism and after Campbell read the poem explained this poem was how one student reacted to the strikes. "I had also attempted to make it clear that my intent was not to hurt the feelings of any of my listeners, many of whom were survivors and children of survivors of the concentration camps of World War II" (1969,

p. 160). He called the poem both “ugly” in content and “beautiful” in the girl’s ability to express her experience of the strike and racism in general.

The *New York Times* picked up the story when the UFT filed its complaint on January 15, 1969 about the program, quoting Shanker as saying “(t)his city is going to have to decide whether its teachers are going to teach anti-Semitism or understanding and brotherhood.” Lester asserts that the reactions to the poem by those who read the article were much more “emotional” than those who called in after hearing it on the air (p. 230). While Shanker was quoted, the paper did not contact Lester or Campbell for comment (Lester, 1985). Lester asserts he was painted as an anti-Semite in the mainstream media throughout the poem controversy.

The only recent scholarly examination of the media coverage of Ocean Hill-Brownsville examines semantics in newspapers. The event itself is not the central focus of the study. Rather, Kwartowitz was concerned with the “structural features of language” in his study of the media coverage of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, not the content (p. xii). Kwartowitz’s sole intent was to examine the structural attributes of news articles and bylines from the three strikes to show they actually differed in terms of their intensionality-extensionality (p. 12). In his words, “(i)t was not the concern of the investigation to determine whether bias or propaganda was evident in the byline articles and editorials studied” (p. 30). He chose the incident to study because it generated intensive media coverage and because of its national significance and implications (p. 56).

Overall, assessment of media coverage related to anti-Semitic activity, and the resulting building tensions between blacks and Jews, focuses on what the media got wrong. Much of it was written during the crisis while tensions were high and events were still unfolding. Some authors of these critiques, such as Ferretti, Booth and Lester, were directly involved with or impacted by media coverage. Such perspective provides impassioned viewpoints, but little distance or methodology employed in analyzing the media role.

Framing and framing conflict

Media frames organize information for readers and to some extent journalists themselves. Most Americans, and outer-borough New Yorkers, did not personally witness the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school crisis. Journalists covering the events of this conflict served as readers' eyes and ears. They also created the primary sources scholars use, at least in part, to create their historic narrative and frames.

Entman defined framing as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution" (2004, p. 5). He further divides frames in substantive and procedural frames. Substantive frames help define effects or conditions as problematic, identify causes of conflict, convey a moral judgment and endorse remedies or improvements (p. 5). Procedural frames are similar to "horserace" frames and suggest evaluation of actors' legitimacy (p. 6). Procedural frames focus more granularly, on individual actors in a conflict, for example, whereas substantive frames can provide a

larger context from which to view conflict. Procedural frames also tend to emphasize competition between individuals and between parties. Entman was evaluating frames used in political coverage, but this theory is useful in evaluating conflict frames. For example, substantive frames could contribute to constructive conflict escalation if underlying causes of conflict or remedies are defined.

The words and images used to make up frames carry cultural resonance and magnitude (Entman). Culturally resonant words are those that are memorable, understandable, and emotionally-charged in a culture (p. 6). When those words are repeated and given prominence, they are said to have magnitude. When frames use language that has both cultural resonance and magnitude, they are more likely to evoke similar thoughts and feelings in larger portions of an audience.

In studying the antiwar movement of the 1960s, Gitlin identifies early framing devices including: focus on events instead of larger issues, trivializing actions of opposing groups, overuse of official sources, emphasizing individuals over groups, advancing the story rather than explaining it and conflict over consensus (1980b). The press, he says, maintains dominant frames in part because of the everyday momentum of their routine, however, sources can exert power by advancing dominant frames. Stakeholders can advance some frames while downplaying others in providing information to journalists (Jamieson & Waldman).

The meanings readers assign to conflicts is influenced by frames used (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Framing, “the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issue for its audience” (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997, p.

221), can have powerful influence on reader judgment and choice in assigning responsibility for issues (Iyengar, 1990). For example, Nelson, Oxley & Clawson found The choices journalists made about how to cover a story- from the words, phrases and images they convey to the broader ‘angle’ they take on a controversy- can result in substantially different portrayals of the very same event and the broader controversy it represents. These alternative portrayals, or frames, can exert appreciable influence on citizens’ perceptions of the issue and, ultimately, the opinions they express (p. 576).

The critical variable in framing is not necessarily the facts reported, but the manner in which they are arranged and interpreted to construct narratives (Jamieson & Walman, p. xiv). Compelling frames can allow inaccuracies to pass through and become reported as fact (p. xii) such as during the 9/11 crisis when it was misreported that Osama bin Laden speaking in a video to the perpetrators of the attack did not mention it was a suicide mission.

Frames play a significant role in the way readers define and recall information about issues (Valkenburg, Semetko, & De Vreese). Frames can bridge “between elite discourse about a problem or issue and popular comprehension of that issue” (Nelson et al., p. 224). Further, they play on information and associations readers already have in their minds (Nelson et al.). The repeated use of frames can build “schemas” in readers’ minds that tie to emotional reactions (Entman, p. 7) both negative and positive. Over time as schemas are stored in long-term memory, new information about these ideas has the potential to trigger such reactions no matter the content (ibid.)

Readers react to the embedded meaning of a news story based on the frame (Tuchman, 1991, p. 89). Whether they agree with the content or not, they still react to the frame employed. Using a cultural theme such as ‘devil’s bargain’ to frame an issue directs readers to view it in certain terms. In using familiar symbols to frame issues, reporters and editors “proclaim the ‘preferred meaning’ of a text” (p. 90).

The conflict frame “emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions” (Valkenburg, Semetko, & De Vreese, 1999, p. 551). Usually this frame employs war-like language and emphasizes competition (p. 551). Some conflict frames, while helping readers make sense of a range of information can also suggest courses of action to be taken to solve the conflict (Nelson et al., 1997). For example, framing a conflict as a “lingering dispute” can suggest nothing can be done about the situation. Conflicts portrayed through collateral damage reports (even in-depth individual portraits of those most affected by conflict on a daily basis) as opposed to probing into the underlying issues or contexts create a frame in which resolution seems distant and hopeless.

Conflict is often sensationalized with the opposing side marginalized by the media and leaving both sides needing to up the ante to keep media attention (Gitlin, 1980a). Marginalizing conflict frames are often a result of media overdependence on official sources (ibid.). Such framing usually conveys a negative message to audiences. The type of framing used in reporting conflicts influences how readers respond to the conflict and disputing parties (Evans, 2010).

In covering conflict, stories often lack balance with one side of the controversy not contacted or featured (Simon, Fico, & Lacy, 1989). Sources are often a major influence

on coverage with sources already getting attention voicing their side of the issue (Fico & Soffin, 1994). Further, some perspectives might then be completely left out of coverage or sources cited might not accurately reflect representative perspectives (Fico & Soffin). Sources can keep coverage on the right track, such as by promoting resolution and keeping the focus on the issues at hand as opposed to employing diversionary tactics.

Jamieson and Waldman acknowledge that frames shift throughout coverage of an issue (p. 195). However, because sources can impact framing they can also keep dominant frames from shifting, or they can affect frame shifts to their benefit (ibid.)

In covering conflict between ethnic groups in the United States, “reporters and columnists often resort to enduring frameworks that tend to reinforce the values and interests of the status quo” (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 574). Therefore, the dominant culture’s beliefs about and perceptions of minorities influence framing of those minorities in coverage. For example, in regard to causes of conflict, individual blame and responsibility is often a frame applied to minorities whereas with whites, blame and responsibility is often attributed to external causes (p. 576.)

Entman and Rojecki found little in the media that intentionally promotes racism but even less that advances racial harmony (2000). For example, coverage of inter-ethnic relations can reinforce ideologies can place “model” minorities against “bad” minorities created by dominant society (Shah & Thornton, 1994). Jews are often held up as “model” minorities who have quickly and easily assimilated into society while African Americans are often portrayed as refusing to assimilate, dwellers in the distant “ghetto,” and militant in their aspirations (Gordon.)

Researchers acknowledge the pressures reporters and editors face in reporting the news. From specific newsroom cultures to administrative pressures to simple deadline issues, journalists are under the gun to produce interesting, relevant and readable copy to their customers- the readers. The sources available to a reporter impact how a story is told. Further, the influence a source carries can also contribute to the narrative, both in how the reporter relates in and how readers interpret it. However, the intention of a reporter is not as important as the subsequent meanings derived by audience members from framing according to Gitlin (1980b, p. 59).

Overall, frames can help readers view a conflict in terms of what the conflict is about, who the stakeholders are and what their interests are. Frames have been shown to influence public opinion and policy makers. In the case of the poem incident, inflamed individuals and groups called on the Board of Education, the Mayor, state officials and federal agencies to fire Campbell, fire Lester and punish WBAI for their actions.

Chapter 3

Method

This study will look at what frames emerge from examining coverage of the incident when teacher Les Campbell read an anti-Semitic poem written by a fifteen-year-old student on Julius Lester's WBAI-FM radio show on December 26, 1969. The poem, called "Anti-Semitism," was dedicated to UFT president Albert Shanker. The study will look at a distinct time period of coverage to identify and qualitatively analyze the frames used to determine if they suggest constructive or destructive outcomes to readers. In other words, did these frames have the potential to inflame or calm the conflict between blacks and Jews which was exacerbated by this particular event? I will examine the coverage in chronological order from the first article that appeared on January 16, 1969 until the conflict over the poem was resolved in April 1969.

After an initial identification of the frames, I will analyze the coverage from a qualitative perspective. I will examine the language used in how it encourages destructive or construction outcomes. I will also look at sources used, paying close attention to overuse of official sources, self-appointed leaders, and militant individuals claiming to represent a larger group. And, I will observe if articles provide the context of the bigger issues underlying the conflict.

This study will employ the qualitative analysis model outlined by Altheide (1996) for analyzing content. His twelve-step process provides a framework for immersing oneself in data, allowing categories of framing to emerge, using constant comparison to check

coding, and creating both typical and extreme examples of analyzed content in order to reflect social activity as captured by media.

Qualitative analysis can be defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). It emphasizes “an integrated view of speech/text and their specific contexts” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1). Qualitative studies can allow for more flexible and complex analysis, according to Gitlin, that “remains true to the actual complexity and contradictoriness of media artifacts” (1980b, p. 303).

Conflict theory, as delineated by Pruitt and Kim, provides the framework from which to view the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict and Campbell’s tactic. Conflict escalation is the use of increasingly contentious tactics by parties. Each party can define for itself whether a tactic is contentious or not. For example, the UFT interpreted the reading of the poem as a contentious tactic. In framing the coverage of the poem and subsequent reactions by the involved parties, the *Times* suggested to readers how to view the stakeholders, their interests, strategies, tactics and the origin of the overall Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict. Frames applied during escalation of the conflict will be identified and discussed whether they were more likely to suggest destructive or constructive outcomes based on Pruitt and Kim’s definitions.

Constructive outcomes include:

- Win-win thinking by parties is emphasized
- Reconciliation of legitimate interests is emphasized

- Unification/bonds between parties are emphasized
- Positive social change is emphasized, in particular for the oppressed party

Destructive outcomes include:

- Group polarization is emphasized (both within and between groups)
- Blaming is emphasized
- One party's views are emphasized over another
- Behavior of individuals is emphasized as representative of a party, creating bias, hostility and distance
- Negative social change is emphasized

In addition to examining the articles for how they were framed in terms of destructive or constructive outcomes, they will also be analyzed thematically. How was the conflict portrayed in terms of the source of the conflict? Thematic frames of this incident include framing the incident as:

- an Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy problem
- a racial problem in schools
- a city-wide racial problem
- a black/Jewish problem
- a First Amendment issue

By using Glaser and Strauss' "constant comparison" model for qualitative analysis, new frames might emerge from returning repeatedly to the data for coding. As new frames emerge, they will be added to the coding and coded articles will be reexamined. Some articles will appear to fit into more than one frame, but they will be assigned to the most apparent, salient frame. The initial frames were identified by reading the articles twice through and noting themes based on what the article seemed to convey the conflict was about.

The two framing categories, conflict outcome and source of conflict, are examined in tandem. It was determined if articles were suggesting destructive or constructive outcomes. At the same time, articles were coded for thematic frames. Articles were then analyzed for how thematic frames and suggested outcomes could have potentially framed the conflict for readers.

Zhang and Wildemuth advocate for systematically comparing each text assigned to a category with those already assigned throughout the coding process (p. 4). By doing so, the properties of each category can be understood and articulated. And such comparison allows for emerging categories.

A textual analysis of the stories and their thematic frames will be done to determine if and how they fit into constructive or destructive outcome frames. Careful attention will be paid to sources, tone and language employed in creating narrative. Metaphors, grammar, descriptions of actors or actions, quotes from sources, and contextual information will be noted. Information or sources not included will also be noted and analyzed.

For example, Gitlin discusses the use of quotation marks in neutralizing statements or trivializing them (1981b). When quotes are used around phrases or words with no attribution, such as when the media referred to “peace marches,” this can trivialize, express irony about, or create distance from societal norms (p. 80). Often when quotation marks are used to clearly attribute statements, this can neutralize them in that they are not presented necessarily as fact (p. 80).

Gitlin also discusses prominence of examples. For example, it was factual that elements of the Students for a Democratic Society were becoming increasingly militant in their approach to the anti-war movement. However, coverage accentuated this as a troubling social problem which they severed from the context of the escalation of the war in Vietnam (p. 80). By describing the New Left as “extremist” and implying it was a rampant social issue, the media portrayed the New Left as dangerous to public good (p. 29).

Articles from January 16, 1969 to April 1, 1969 will be analyzed. This time frame follows the incident from when the *Times* first reported on it until the FCC ruled on the UFT’s complaint, which can be considered a resolution of this particular incident. Repeated searches were done in the Historical *New York Times* database, which is indexed and readily available online. Searches were done using the following terms (used both individually and together to ensure a thorough search strategy):

- Ocean Hill-Brownsville
- School controversy
- Decentralization

- Anti-Semitism
- Jew*
- Negro
- Black
- Julius Lester
- Les Campbell/Leslie Campbell
- WBAI

Searches were limited by the above time frame and for document types of “article” and “editorial article.” Interestingly, the majority of articles resulting from an “Ocean Hill-Brownsville” search were directly relevant to the controversy. Articles were read for content and kept if they were about or devoted at least one entire paragraph to the poem incident. Subsequently, twenty-six articles and five editorials were chosen for study.

Editorials are included in the study because readers look to them for how to think and feel about an issue. Editorials in the *Times*, the newspaper of record, potentially carry more weight with readers and policy makers.

Stories in which the incident is not the primary focus are included in the study and will be coded as having “secondary focus.” These stories are included because they help us understand the symbolic meaning the incident had in both the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict and the resulting conflict between African-Americans and Jews in New York City. They help us see how stakeholders might have continued to use the poem months after the incident to inflame or calm the conflict. They also help provide context as to

why this particular example was used to stand-in for black anti-Semitism and how this was either suggesting a destructive or constructive outcome.

Stories will be initially coded for: headline, author, date, page number, article or editorial, primary or secondary focus, and length in paragraphs. Over repeated readings, units will be assigned thematic frames. Using Altheide's model, content will be analyzed multiple times with constant comparison utilized to give opportunity for new thematic frames to emerge and to verify that units do indeed fit into frames. Units will then be analyzed more deeply, as previously described for language, source use and context that are in line with destructive or constructive conflict outcomes.

Findings will be presented quantitatively and qualitatively. Thematic frames will be counted as will units that can be categorized for being destructive or constructive. A thorough qualitative analysis of typical and extreme cases will follow to answer the research question.

Chapter 4

Findings

A total of 26 articles and five editorials from the time period January 16, 1969 to March 29, 1969 were analyzed for this study. *New York Times* staff writers wrote all stories except one. The exception was a short wire story from Washington, DC that focused on First Amendment issues involving radio stations and mentioned the pending FCC case against WBAI as an example. This is not surprising since it was a highly localized incident, dealing with city government and organizations. The writers ranged from the Education beat to City desk and included enterprise reporters. This event and its subsequent events impacted the city in widespread ways reflected in how and who reported it.

In summary, in response to the first research question, “Did *The New York Times* suggest to its readers that the conflict escalated by the poem would be resolved destructively or constructively?” it was determined that the coverage mostly suggested a destructive outcome to the conflict. The poem was clearly a contentious tactic and stakeholders from both sides responded to this escalation with harder tactics. *The New York Times* was clearly reporting the reality of the conflict. However, *The New York Times* did not always present both sides but seemed to depend on official sources from the UFT and Jewish organizations. Further, coverage often did not attempt to convey to readers what the conflict was about, as seen through thematic frames used in the articles and editorials.

In summary, in response to the second research question, “Through thematic framing, what did *The New York Times* suggest to its readers the conflict was about?” it was determined the coverage suggested that this was an issue central to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district. While the poem was tied to this conflict, this framing limits the scope of the issue. It could potentially lay blame for the conflict at the feet of the local school board instead of helping readers understand the larger context of racism and poverty in New York City.

Dominant Frames

The dominant frame used when the event was the primary focus of the article was “anti-Semitism/racism in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy.” Seven articles used this frame. The dominant frame for when the event was the secondary focus of the article was “anti-Semitism/racism as a city-wide issue.” Five articles used this frame. Not surprisingly, articles initially used the first frame and as the event spurred reactions and responses, the second frame became more dominant. And the event increasingly changed from the primary focus of articles to secondary focus, treated as a symptom of citywide issues. Coverage also mainly fell under destructive framing early on. As the focus became more secondary and centered on citywide issues, the coverage became generally more constructive in terms of the conflict and efforts to resolve it. Of the articles analyzed, thirteen could be categorized as having destructive framing qualities, ten could be categorized as constructively framed and four fell under neither category. Tables 1 and

2 on page 77 provide a summary of the article findings. Table 4 on page 96 provides a complete list of all articles and how each was coded.

Five editorials were also analyzed using the same categories and criteria. Of these, four addressed the poem incident as the primary focus of the piece and one featured it as a secondary focus. Three of the editorials could be categorized as having a destructive frame while two were considered constructive. Table 3 on page 84 provides a summary of the editorial findings. Table 5 on page 99 provides a complete list of all articles and how each was coded.

Article frames and focuses over the period of coverage

The first week of coverage: January 16-22, 1969

While the poem was read on December 26, 1968 it did not receive coverage until the UFT filed an FCC complaint against WBAI in mid-January. When the story broke on January 16, 1969 the first article was decidedly destructively-framed. This trend continued until late January when coverage began to focus on citywide efforts to address racism and anti-Semitism. The poem was initially first covered as a single incident and then put into the context of a symptom of greater issues.

The first article about the poem incident (“Teachers protest poem to F.C.C.: Anti-Semitic verses were read over the radio here,” Jan. 16) did not make front-page news and appeared on page 48. The article included blaming, emphasis of one party’s views over another and the behavior of individuals was represented as that of a party. In the first paragraph, the teacher Leslie Campbell is described as a “controversial Negro teacher in

the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district.” While Campbell was involved in controversies during the tensest months of the teacher’s strike, this initial description tended to be the entirety of the *Times*’ assessment of Campbell. Potentially, readers could view him as a black troublemaker representing the school district which was known at this point for the vicious fighting and strife it caused for the city. Campbell himself is not interviewed for the story, nor is it stated that he was unavailable at the time for comment. Campbell has never commented publicly on whether or not he was contacted for comment.

The second paragraph of the Jan. 16 article includes wording used throughout the coverage of the poem. “The poem was ostensibly written by a 15-year-old Negro student,” states the reporter. The phrasing casts doubt as to who actually wrote the poem, potentially leading readers to conclude that perhaps Campbell wrote the piece but attributed it to a student. This type of phrasing is used often during the first two weeks of coverage.

Of the three sources quoted in this first article, two are UFT representatives. Albert Shanker is quoted as saying “Leslie Campbell’s proud reading of his student’s anti-Semitic poem is an indication of his teaching approach.” Dan Sanders, a UFT representative, said that the filing was prompted by a flood of calls from union members who heard the program and stated that WBAI refused to make a transcript available.

The third source interviewed, WBAI general manager Frank Millspaugh, explains that a transcript was not available because it did not exist, not because they refused to provide one. He is then quoted as saying that he believes the intent of reading the poem

was “to demonstrate what a lot of people don’t want to take seriously- the strong and growing hostility and resentment of Jewish whites among ghetto blacks.” This type of back and forth blaming presented in the first article on the poem becomes typical of the first two weeks of coverage.

Interestingly neither Campbell nor Lester was interviewed for the first story. Campbell has never commented on whether the press contacted him, but Lester has stated repeatedly over the years that only *The New York Post* contacted him for comment. This is particularly problematic because the article states that the poem evoked “praise” from Mr. Lester. And the characterization of Lester is tied solely to his “revolutionary” activities. The transcript Fred Ferretti provided in the *Columbia Journalism Review* shows Lester praised the student’s ability to express her frustration with the strike. Lester goes on to explain that he does not want to offend any of his listeners, especially those who are Holocaust survivors, but wants listeners to understand how the strike has impacted the views of students caught in the middle. None of this is addressed in the article. Nor is it ever addressed in any of the *Times*’ coverage. Both a transcript and tape of the radio show were available from WBAI. Fred Ferretti asked for and received these shortly after the show aired.

Finally the first article connects the poem to an editorial that Albert Vann, president of the African-American Teachers Association, wrote for the organization’s newsletter. The article compares lines in the poem about Israel’s struggle with Arab countries to the editorial, calling it “strikingly similar.” A number of conclusions could be drawn by readers with this inclusion, all of them hostile and broad. In comparing the two pieces,

the article mentions Campbell's active involvement with the Association without going into details.

The next three articles on the poem (Jan. 18, Jan. 19, Jan. 20) frame the incident as representative of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy and within a destructive frame. All of them reprint the first few lines of the poem and use official sources from the school board, union or Jewish community. These official sources blame the school district, WBAI and Campbell for the incident. WBAI is brought to task for providing a forum for anti-Semitism and Campbell is presented as an angry, anti-Semitic representative of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools. Additionally, these next three articles continue to describe the poem as allegedly or reportedly written by the fifteen year old student. While it is possible reporters were hedging until they could confirm she wrote the poem, Lester and Campbell to this day assert they were not officially contacted by *Times* reporters at this time. The writer of the poem, Sia Berhan, openly claimed credit for the poem in her Ocean Hill- Brownsville neighborhood (Hampton and Fayer, 1990, p. 507.)

On January 20, the first African-American voice is called to respond to the incident. Albert Vann, a self-appointed spokesperson and president of the African-American Teachers Association, is quoted as saying about Mayor John Lindsay's response to the incident that "in his hurry to appease the powerful Jewish financiers of the city" had "played fast and loose" with the rights of the Negro teacher...to speak without fear of reprisal,' ("Mayor assailed on disputed poem: Negro teachers accuse him of

‘appeasement.’”) The Jan. 20 article states that Vann “warned” that the black community will “not tolerate” and “will demonstrate its disapproval of unfair action.”

The only voice supporting Campbell in the Jan. 20 piece is contentious, angry, and potentially threatening. Gitlin discusses the use of self-appointed spokespeople by the media to represent non-dominant views (p. 150) and that such leaders are often promoted selectively by the media (p. 153) for reasons ranging from promoting non-dominant views as extremist (p. 116) to the entertainment value they offer.

The fifth article the *Times*’ published on the poem keeps the poem as the primary focus, but changes framing (“WBAI aide rejects Shanker’s charge of anti-Semitism,” Jan. 21.) While the previous articles were framed as an Ocean Hill-Brownsville issue, this piece examines the incident as a First Amendment issue exploring the responsibility of the press. For the fifth time in five days of coverage, the opening lines of the poem are again reprinted. The only source quoted is station manger Millspaugh who blames Shanker for seeking to gain support for the “unpopular strike by raising the spectre of anti-Semitism.”

Millspaugh is then extensively quoted as saying that “It is the responsibility of the news media, in general, and WBAI in particular to make full disclosure” of anti-Semitic and racist feelings on the part of some city residents. “These feelings will not disappear by pretending they do not exist; I hope that they may be alleviated by open and public discussion.”

Tuchman notes that reporters sometimes use direct quotes to express their sentiments with seeming distance from a story (p. 95.) She also states that the more a source is

quoted, the more those quotes support claims as “mutually determining facts,” (p. 95.) While Millspaugh is the only source from the WBAI side quoted at this time, he is the most reasoned voice in the discussion of the poem up until now. He is also the only source calling for citizens to openly acknowledge issues of racism and anti-Semitism in the city. It is possible, using Tuchman’s findings, that some reporters used Millspaugh’s quotes to express their views.

The second week of coverage: January 23-29, 1969

On Jan. 23, the first somewhat constructively framed article appeared. Focused on the poem incident as a First Amendment issue, the article discusses attempts at conflict resolution (“WBAI plans to put its critics on the air.”) The article discusses the “good faith” WBAI demonstrates by reviving a series called “Jewish Commentary” to ensure the Jewish community will have the opportunity for “immediate response” to matters affecting them. Additionally, WBAI will offer “innovations” by which “persons affected by any current programming thrust will be able to present their views.”

The Jan. 23 article also differs from previous coverage in that the poem is not reprinted. Additionally the poem is described as having “contained anti-Semitic phrases” rather than characterized as anti-Semitic. While this Jan. 23 piece is the first article categorized as constructive, it is hesitantly constructive. And no other sources other than Millspaugh, the station manager, are quoted. There is no sense of how those affected by the poem feel about this development. The article gives the sense that escalation was waning.

Conflict around the poem escalated negatively that night when three young African-American men appeared on Lester's show to discuss the poem and one of them stated, "as far as I'm concerned, more power to Hitler. He didn't make enough lampshades out of them. He didn't make enough belts out of them," ("Schoolgirl's poem defended by youths on WBAI program," Jan. 24.)

The Jan. 24 article on the escalation showed surprising restraint in reporting on the response of young blacks to the poem conflict. For example, the above quote was not reported until the second to last paragraph. The young men are initially presented as "three Negro panelists" who viewed the poem as "the valid expression of a feeling widespread among black students in New York." The poem is characterized as "containing anti-Semitic phrases" and Campbell is not described as "controversial," the usual description used. The young men are initially presented as rational and identified by the schools they attend. The ideas expressed by them are summarized by the reporter in fairly benign language, such as "the poem reflected the feeling of most of the black students they knew."

It is not until the end of the Jan. 24 article on the escalation that the contentious and offensive direct quotes are reprinted by the *Times*. This is a marked departure from the initial reporting by the *Times* on this event. For example after reprinting the quote, the *Times* writer reported that "Mr. Lester commented later that WBAI was not responsible for the opinions expressed on its program."

Another article published on Jan. 23 covering the conflict around the poem ("2 teachers' cases sent to Donovan: Board declines to order charges of anti-Semitism but

bides school chief to act”) framed the escalation within the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy frame. In the 30-paragraph article detailing the school board’s rejection of a resolution to bring charges against Campbell and Albert Vann for anti-Semitism, the reporter used only official sources from the board of education, the mayor’s office and Jewish interest groups. Campbell, Vann, or any officials associated with the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district were not interviewed. Vann’s inflammatory statements regarding the mayor trying to “appease the power Jewish financiers of the city” were repeated.

Most of the quotes reported in this second Jan. 23 article center around blaming Vann and Campbell who are portrayed as representatives of both the Ocean Hill- Brownsville school district and African-Americans, in general. New York State Education Commissioner Dr. James E. Allen, Jr. is quoted:

The action of Mr. Leslie Campbell, a teacher in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools of New York City, in reading publicly and commenting favorably on an offensive verse allegedly written by a student has done a grave disservice to both the Jewish and Negro communities of the city and to the exhaustive efforts of countless people of all races and creeds to ameliorate racial tensions and improve human relations.

Again, the origins of the poem are disputed by an official source in this Jan. 23 piece, casting potential responsibility onto Campbell. While the reporters could have been trying to confirm the girl’s identity, it could have been easily confirmed by contacting either Campbell or Lester. The reporter does not include information as to what kinds of

efforts are being done and by whom to address racial tensions. Rather, the article continues with five paragraphs outlining the efforts of Jewish organizations to press the school board to bring action against Vann and Campbell.

Readers are left with the distinct impression that the poem incident created racial tensions by trouble-making Negro men. Considerable length was given to reporting official assertions of who is to blame. Yet in these 30 paragraphs from Jan. 23, there is no exploration of the racial tensions and efforts to address them mentioned by Dr. Allen. Readers are given no context other than the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy for racial tensions and anti-Semitic sentiments.

Conflicts, such as the poem and the school strikes, are emphasized in destructive ways that could create bias, hostility and distance for readers from the greater issues. Reuben notes news media can perpetuate narrow understanding of conflict escalation by reducing complex issues using issue dualism (focus on two competing sides) and employing battle metaphors (p. 62) which foster a zero-sum mindset. Distance, bias, and hostility can enhance the likelihood of more contentious actions (p. 64) by parties. Additionally, they do not foster sympathy for parties among readers and can reinforce stereotypes (p. 64.)

Nine days after coverage began, the framing and focus began to change. The poem was usually now the secondary focus of articles and the frame used was either city-wide racial problem or school-wide racial problem. The exception was when the First Amendment frame was used and then the poem was generally the primary focus.

On Jan. 25, the first article to use the city-wide racial problem frame appeared (“Outcry growing against bigotry: City Council president urges action on anti-Semitism.”) The article quoted officials urging “immediate action to meet increasing acts and expressions of anti-Semitism” and against “violence in the schools and the accompanying problems of racial tension.”

Rabbis are quoted in this Jan. 25 article as saying that “large numbers” of Jews were seeking to move to Israel, organize their own “protective brigades,” and that “hardly a minute passes that some member of the Jewish faith is not attacked, mugged or robbed.” Israel Breslow, president of the Workman’s Circle, a Jewish labor fraternal organization, is quoted comparing WBAI and Julius Lester to Joseph Goebbels.

This article from Jan. 25 typifies the next wave of reporting. City, school, and Jewish organization sources are heavily quoted and usually blaming another party for not cooperating, causing trouble or not taking a stance against anti-Semitism. The same incidents (the poem, Tyrone Woods’ statement about Hitler, for example) are used repeatedly as examples of increased racial tensions and anti-Semitism. If caution is urged, it’s usually done by accusing a group of either overreacting or not encouraging their party to exercise caution.

The Jan. 25 article allows a rabbi to have the final word which typifies the type of blame-filled, negative and “all is lost” sentiment expressed in articles covering the poem at this point: “We have tried to live side by side with Negroes and we have worked hard in community councils, housing programs and integration projects, but we have to admit failure.”

The first article to provide a larger context and deeper examination of the issues surrounding the poem appeared on Jan. 26 (“Jews debating black anti-Semitism.”) The issue is explored in a 60-paragraph article that focuses entirely on the Jewish perspective and experience of the issue. The use of Jewish sources over Negro ones is nothing new in the coverage, but this particular article is glaring its lack of other voices and total focus on Jewish views. Again, the only black voice heard is Vann’s much-reprinted remark about the Mayor appeasing Jewish financiers.

The first half of the Jan. 26 article emphasizes the blame various groups assign for the “racial and religious hatred brought to the surface by the city’s school crisis.” Jews blame each other for “an overly defensive reaction” that will “hasten the political anti-Semitism.” Blame is placed on Negro and Christian leaders by Jews for “continued silence” against acts of anti-Semitism.

Readers who continue to read the second half of the article from Jan. 26 will finally encounter the first attempt to provide greater context to the issue. Several Jewish intellectuals and official sources such as Earl Raab (a sociologist), Norman Podhoretz (editor of Commentary magazine), and Dore Schary of the Anti-Defamation League provide contexts ranging from Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement to “real causes of racial hatred- the slums of the ghettos, educational and job opportunities.”

The article from Jan. 26 further details efforts by “liberal” Jewish organizations to use their “influence to counsel prudence” and “strongly cautioned against allowing exaggerated fears of anti-Semitism to disrupt the traditional Jewish support for Negro

rights.” Even in talking about efforts towards conflict resolution, the voices heard are still assigning blame for failure to act against acts of anti-Semitism or exaggerating them.

Additionally this article typifies attempts at constructive reporting that devolve into destructive reporting. Failing to include black voices or perspectives emphasize one party’s views over the others. Blaming is emphasized, even when conflict resolution is encouraged which results in a feeling that such efforts might be fruitless because of the actions of others.

January 28-March 29, 1969: Conflict resolution enters the coverage

Discussions of attempts at conflict resolution began to appear near the end of January. The poem was predominantly reported as an example among others of the city-wide racial problem brought to surface by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district. For the most part, the poem was the secondary focus of articles as was the experimental school district. While conflict resolution efforts are covered, very few could be categorized as constructive framing. Negative blaming, citing exceptional events, ignoring causes of issues, and leaving out voices contribute to a largely destructive framing of articles (Reuben.)

At this point in time, the end of January, a number of events occurred that are attributed to the poem incident. First, a high school principal in Brooklyn allegedly asked to have 1,000 black students transferred out of his school to “balance” the racial make-up. The mayor responded by refusing to allow the transfer. The principal tried to backpedal,

but it was too late and the incident became tied up with the poem as symptoms of the tensions brought about by Ocean Hill-Brownsville.

Second, the Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted an exhibit of African-American art from Harlem called “Harlem on my Mind” which was criticized heavily by blacks for being patronizing and reflective of white perspectives. The exhibit catalog opened with an essay written years before for the exhibit by a teen girl from Harlem. She paraphrased *Beyond the Melting Pot* by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan when she wrote “our contempt for the Jews makes us feel more completely American in sharing a national prejudice.” The problematic essay did not attribute the ideas she expressed nor did any coverage in the *Times* report the original source. Rather, the teen writer and the Museum’s director Thomas P.F. Hoving were blamed for “aggravating an already tense situation in New York” (“Museum withdraws catalogue attacked as slur on Jews,” Jan. 31).

Between January 28 and April 1, fifteen articles featuring the poem were published. Four featured the poem as the primary focus of the article. The poem was the primary focus of articles at this point when updates on the FCC ruling were reported. At this point the frame employed when the poem was the primary focus of reporting was that of First Amendment issue.

Six articles published between Jan. 28 and Feb. 22 covered conflict resolution efforts using constructive framing. The poem was the secondary focus in all of the articles, but was singled out as the issue which led to the need for such resolution efforts. Other examples of events that followed the poem incident and also contributed to the need for

resolution efforts were mentioned. They included Tyrone Woods' statements on Julius Lester's show, the alleged attempt by a high school principal to have nearly a thousand black students transferred out of his school to "balance" the racial population, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibit.

Four of the constructively-framed articles (Jan. 31, Feb. 3, Feb. 7, Feb. 22) frame the poem and subsequent events as a pressing city-wide racial issue while the other two (Feb. 8, Feb. 10) frame it as an issue between blacks and Jews. These articles use constructive escalation framing by emphasizing win-win thinking by parties and reconciliation of legitimate interests. Further, non-official sources are used and positive social change stemming from the conflict is highlighted. The conflict around the poem is put into a broader social context that tries to examine the root issues and positive social bonds between the parties are emphasized. The four articles framed as city-wide racial issues are discussed first.

A Jan. 31 article ("50 rabbis and Negro clergymen searching for racial peace") highlights win-win thinking between the parties. Describing a meeting between Jewish and black clergy, the article mentions efforts to "fashion concrete action toward greater understanding," "encourage dialogue rather than diatribe," and "work for a more balanced view of current tensions instead of to highlight the virulence of isolated demagogues."

A Feb. 7 article ("Golar promises to combat 'all kinds of racism'") covered the reconciliation efforts of the Human Rights Commission appointed by Mayor Lindsay. The Commission itself was in the spotlight when Lindsay replaced an African-American

man, William H. Booth, whom Jewish critics called “insensitive to anti-Semitism.” In fact, Booth’s firing became one of the events grouped with the poem incident exemplifying city-wide racial tensions. This article reported on the policies of his replacement, Simeon Golar, an African-American, to address the poem incident and subsequent events.

In this article from Feb. 7, the reconciliation of legitimate interests is emphasized in the conflict resolution process. Golar is quoted saying “his policy would be to serve all racial groups.” He goes on to say, “we cannot adequately serve any one element in the population without serving all.” The article went on to report about meetings between Mayor Lindsay and both black and Jewish individuals and organizations. These meetings are for “translating goodwill statements into goodwill works,” the Mayor is quoted saying.

While the Feb. 7 article does not mention specific works or actions, the focus is on coming up with solutions that benefit all of the groups involved. Previously, articles focused mostly on efforts geared towards the Jewish community. Within the context of the offensive poem, addressing the concerns of impacted Jews is understandable. However, the poem was read in a wider context mostly ignored by the media until recent articles such as this one.

The article from Feb. 7 goes on to quote Dr. Nathan Wright, Jr., a black author and educator, who provides greater context for tension between blacks and Jews. In the past, this context was provided by Jewish voices. Dr. Wright, according to the article, felt that “Jewish fears of anti-Semitism in New York City stemmed from the difficulty

experienced by Jews in changing their relationship to Negroes from that of ‘patrons or parents’ to that of ‘peers.’”

These articles from late January and early February mark a change in the way blacks have been quoted in coverage. First, self-appointed spokespeople like Albert Vann and Tyrone Woods are quoted less, or not at all. Individuals quoted who are black still come from official organizations, but they are portrayed as reasonable, wanting resolution, and supportive of the Mayor’s attempts at resolution. Quotes that could be problematic, such as Dr. Wright’s, are placed in the context of resolution-focused, mediated discussions of the larger issues surrounding the poem incident. They are not inflammatory speeches, but calm discussions of why this event could occur in the first place.

The two articles (Feb. 8, Feb. 10) framing the poem as a black-Jewish issue both focus on the bonds between the two parties and positive social change for blacks. A Feb. 8 article (“Back civil rights, Jews are urged: Reform rabbis fear split on anti-Semitism issue”) details an appeal by the Central Conference of American Rabbis to Jews “to continue to take part in the civil rights movement and not to permit the anti-Semitism of some black militants to cause the split between Negroes and Jews.” The focal point of the article, penned by George Dugan, is the appeal to Jews by one of their organizations to realign themselves with black civil rights and allow black “militants to cause a split between Negroes and Jews.”

The Feb. 8 article quotes the organization’s official statement connecting Jewish struggles with the civil rights struggles of blacks in an effort to encourage Jews to “understand the overriding need of a powerless people sick with self-hatred.” The article

goes on to quote the statement which asks Jews to consider that they “appear the instrument of the white man’s oppression” in the eyes of many blacks. And finally, “we must not allow ourselves to be divided, Jew against black.” The article changes focus from a plea to Jews for understanding to the efforts by Mayor Lindsay to combat “racial bias” in a meeting at Gracie Mansion with 40 religious leaders.

Now focused on official efforts at reconciliation, the article from Feb. 8 includes numerous quotes by city officials and rabbis centered on hopeful conflict resolution. Particular efforts at conflict resolution, such as the meeting hosted by the Mayor are cited. Human Rights Commission chair Simeon Golar, an African-American man, describes the meeting as “reaching out into the city and pulling people together.” “There’s more that joins us than divides us,” he adds. George Howard, president of the Brooklyn Heights Association, is quoted saying about the meeting toward the end of the piece, “I got a good feeling of good faith, of people wanting to work together.” Dugan concludes the long piece with news about demands by the Jewish Defense League to remove a Bedford-Stuyvesant teacher accused of using the poem in a lesson. The article relays that while efforts and pleas for reconciliation are stemming from official organizations and authorities, there are still groups fighting battles in the Brooklyn trenches.

While these six articles (Jan. 31, Feb. 3, Feb. 7, Feb. 8, Feb. 10, Feb. 22) are categorized as constructive, it is because they are predominantly constructively-focused with regards to the conflict. They are not entirely free of negative elements such as blaming, emphasis of Jewish views over blacks, overreliance on official sources, and

expressions of hopelessness. However, more black voices are heard from a wider scope than previously. Quotes from both sides are far less hostile and irrational. Negative quotes and information are presented as understandable anger and frustration within a greater social context, such as Mrs. Mae Miller of the Tompkins Tenants Association telling the Mayor that blacks are “sick and tired of being used as a political football” (“Back civil rights, Jews are urged”).

January 31-March 29, 1969: Destructive outcome frames

Most during this time period coverage still falls under the destructive category. This includes some articles that focus on conflict resolution efforts, but use blaming, group polarization, emphasis negative social change, and promote Jewish views over those of blacks. This is seen particularly in articles published between February and April, after the poem incident became mostly the secondary focus of articles and held up as emblematic of city racial issues. Coverage waned in mid-February and the poem was mentioned a few times in March until the issue was finally put to rest by the FCC ruling on March 28.

The Jan 31 article “Museum withdraws disputed ‘Harlem on my Mind’ catalogue” covers that issue along with the poem incident as examples of “the wide range of the city’s trouble intergroup relations.” The article opens by stating the Museum withdrew the catalogue in “bowing to pressures from Mayor Lindsay and other political leaders and Jewish organizations.” After covering the catalogue in the first two paragraphs, the rest of

the 43-paragraph article lists events seen as related such as the poem. Included are the “demands,” “charges,” and “complaints” by Jewish and black individuals and groups.

The Jan. 31 article mentions “related issues” and “other developments” such as: a rash of 14 synagogue fires and vandalism, demonstrations by the Jewish Defense League calling for Leslie Campbell’s removal, and official remarks made by organizations that either condemn Campbell and the Museum or defend their “freedom of speech.” The result is a sense of hopelessness as blame and insults are traded, the same negative incidents are again reported, and only one instance of conflict resolution is mentioned. And the instance was marred by Albert Shanker’s refusal to meet with the group called “Black Concerned Clergymen” who invited him to discuss “singling out individual incidents of Negro anti-Semitism to blame the entire black community unjustly.”

Another article which used the city-wide racial issue frame (“Reform leaders fears some Jews are overreacting to slurs by ‘hate-mongers’ and ‘racists,’” Feb. 3) emphasizes the blaming rampant through the conflict. Usually articles that emphasize blame focus on Jewish individuals and leaders assigning blame for the poem incident, for resulting anti-Semitic acts, and for failure to adequately deal with the poem incident on the part of the school board, Mayor’s office, WBAI, and the black community. This particular article highlights Jewish leaders who blame the Jewish community for stirring themselves to “the brink of hysteria.”

The article from Feb. 3 covers the remarks of Albert Vorspan, of the reform American Hebrew Congregations association, when he spoke at a national Hadassah meeting “prompted by current concern over anti-Semitism.” Vorspan criticized the

powerful New York Board of Rabbis and Anti-Defamation League of New York for overreacting to singular events and attributing them to blacks generally.

Vorspan went on to blame the media in the Feb. 3 article for “anointing hate-mongers and frenzied racists as instant black leaders.” The article goes on to quote Dr. M. Moran Weston, an Episcopal minister in Harlem, saying “scurrilous statements made by some Negroes with no standing in their community had received wide circulation.” Dr. Weston is further quoted saying that single statements made by a single person should not be elevated into a group. Dr. Weston’s quote is followed by Rabbi Simon Greenberg, vice chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who says “the people concerned over the anti-Semitic rantings of the Nazis in the nineteen-twenties had been told they were an unrepresented group of irresponsible people.”

Vorspan represents what Gitlin would call the “responsible” wing of a movement (1980, p. 119). His is the centered voice of reason amidst blame and inflammatory speeches printed and reprinted in articles covering this incident. Vorspan advises restraint, calm, and reason. Additionally, this is also one of scant instances in which centered black voices are heard and condemn the most-heard voices as self-appointed.

This article from Feb. 3 could be viewed as telling Jews how they should react to the poem and other incidents. It concludes with a high-profile Jewish leader advising readers to connect these incidents with Nazi Germany. Gitlin noted that often the responsible wings of groups are undercut (p. 119) as more extreme elements are promoted through the press (p. 116).

It is important to note the headline from Feb. 3 identifies “Reform Leaders” as the voices warning to Jews not to “overreact.” The statement was made at a Hadassah meeting, presumably attended by liberal Jews, as the organization has its origins in Zionism and supported liberal causes including civil rights. In this article, as in many others examined, the voice of Jewish reason is often from official Reform sources. In reality the Jews living in Ocean Hill-Brownsville were Orthodox. While it is hard to characterize the Jewish teachers involved in the situation, one can assume they were not Orthodox. Orthodox Jews are most often represented by the “fringe” Jewish Defense League in the coverage.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville point of view was not presented until Feb. 2 (“McCoy won’t act on anti-Semitism: rejects Lindsay’s demands to discipline 2 aides”) in an article that purported to report on efforts at conflict resolution in the school district over the poem, but in a clearly destructive framework. The title frames Ocean Hill-Brownsville administrator Rhody McCoy’s reaction to Mayor Lindsay’s request to dismiss Albert Vann and Leslie Campbell as a refusal to act on anti-Semitism.

The article from Feb. 2 relays McCoy’s five-page letter to Superintendent of Schools Bernard Donovan in response to the Mayor’s request. Phrases from the letter are reported using verbs such as “demanded” and “charged,” framing McCoy’s requests that the district “devote our energies to finding solutions instead of scapegoats” as an angry rant. Many of his quotes echo what city officials and Jewish leaders have said. “Our courses need a detailed review to see that they perform a major role in contributing to racial

understanding,” he is reported as suggesting to Donovan as a “positive action” in resolving the poem issue.

Coverage in February dwindled after the first week. As discussed previously, coverage tended to focus on conflict resolution efforts between official organizations, primarily city and religious, and leaned more toward constructive framing. Still, blaming voices were those most reported, the poem incident was lumped into other singular events and labeled a city-wide issue, and rational, positive black voices were seldom heard.

The only mention of the poem after Feb. 10 was a letter to the editor published on Feb. 16. In it, Reform rabbi Theodore Lewis of Brooklyn pointed out that in covering the poem and other racial incidents reporters had reprinted the poem’s contents and Tyrone Wood’s statements which “is rather unfortunate, and something which *the Times* has been doing very frequently.”

Readers could have a sense that the conflict was de-escalating. The most contentious tactics – the poem itself and support for it by Tyrone Woods and others- appeared to have taken place. Articles on official reconciliation efforts and pleas could have assured some readers that a constructive outcome, led by official groups, was possible. However, coverage of incidents in March related to race, anti-Semitism, and New York City schools illustrate the strong symbolic meaning the poem and Ocean Hill-Brownsville had taken on in the press.

The poem was given scant attention in March until a high school student in the Bronx was suspended after giving a fellow student a copy of the poem. Students responded by demonstrating outside the school. The *Times* reported the demonstration as a “battle with

police” as “student unrest continued to plague the city’s schools,” (“7 youths sized in school melee: 100 at Taft High in Bronx protest the suspension of Negro in rules violation,” Mar. 4.)

“The relationship between white and black students up until recently were excellent,” the school’s principal Carl Cherkis is quoted as saying in the Mar. 4 piece. He goes on to attribute the confrontation to overcrowding. The poem is portrayed as the spark that lit the fire for the demonstration. The focus is on whom is to blame for the demonstration getting out of hand: the police, school administrators, agitating teachers, or “a small group of hard-core student troublemakers.”

This article from Mar. 4 is the last mention of the poem until March 29 when the FCC ruled on the UFT’s complaint against WBAI for airing it. In the *Times*’ coverage of Ocean Hill-Brownsville and any further racial incidents in the city, the poem had ceased to be part of that coverage.

**Table 1 Frames in articles from 1/16/1969-3/29/1969
with incident as primary focus**

| Framing | Destructive Outcome suggested | Constructive Outcome suggested | Neither |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ocean Hill-Brownsville issue | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Racism/anti-Semitism in schools issue | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black-Jewish issue | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| First Amendment issue | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| City-wide racial issue | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 8 | 3 | 2 |

**Table 2 Frames in articles from 1/16/1969-3/29/1969
with incident as secondary focus**

| Framing | Destructive Outcome suggested | Constructive Outcome suggested | Neither |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ocean Hill-Brownsville issue | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Racism/anti-Semitism in schools issue | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black-Jewish issue | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| First Amendment issue | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| City-wide racial issue | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 2 |

Examining editorial coverage

While the conflict was covered as both a primary and secondary event in the *New York Times*, five editorials were published between Jan. 25 and Feb. 3. The coverage during this time period was heated and focused on city-wide racial issues. The poem was mostly covered as a secondary focus during this time. However, the editorials all focused on the poem as the primary point.

Three editorials (Jan. 25, Feb. 2, Feb. 3) frame the poem issue as a freedom of speech issue, one frames it as an issue of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy, and one frames the issue as being between blacks and Jews. One editorial (Feb. 2) was categorized as containing destructive outcome framing, three (Jan. 25, Jan. 26, Feb. 3) were categorized as constructive, and one (Feb. 2) did not fall into either category but potentially could be viewed as constructive because of use of calm tones and rational discussion of bigger issues.

Two editorials written by Jack Gould on Jan. 25 and Feb. 2 focus on the issue of freedom of speech and “the right to abuse it,” in his words. The Jan. 25 editorial (“Radio: the WBAI case and the F.C.C.”) is the first editorial written on the poem incident.

Gould understandably reprints the first few lines of the poem in both pieces, but he also uses phrasing to cast doubt on the authorship of the piece. While most articles used the phrasing “ostensibly” or “allegedly” written by the teen girl, Gould writes in the Jan. 25 piece that the poem was “said to have been written by.” As Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley pointed out, journalists’ word choices can shape the interpretation of facts by readers (1997.) “Said to have been written by” without mention of attempt to confirm the

girl's identity implies hearsay. *Times* reporters mention when they attempted to contact sources in previous articles. Never do they mention attempts to attribute correct authorship, which could have been done.

Gould uses his platform mainly to educate readers on the F.C.C.'s options in how to rule based on communication laws and previous rulings in the first piece. The first editorial from Jan. 25 is a calm and rational discussion which provides greater context to readers in regards to the First Amendment and how it relates to this incident from a legal standpoint. This first editorial could be considered constructive escalation framing because it does provide greater understanding of the issue from a legal standpoint. Looking at the conflict from a legal standpoint could foster constructive dialogue rather than focus on blaming.

Gould's second editorial ("Free speech and the right to abuse it," Feb. 2) attacks WBAI, advising them to "be mature enough to...avoid needless acerbation of racial tensions...WBAI should grow up." In the second and third paragraphs he reprints the first few lines of the poem and Wood's controversial statements about Hitler not making enough lampshades out of Jews.

Gould's editorial takes WBAI sharply to task in the Feb. 2 piece, calling them a "sell-out to opportunistic sensationalism." He accused them of having "trotted out the First Amendment alibi" in response to the controversy. As a journalist, his anger is understandable. He wants his First Amendment rights taken seriously and he feels WBAI is using them as a smokescreen.

By reprinting statements and selections from the poem when at this point readers had been amply exposed to them could potentially inflame the conflict unnecessarily. While this might be an earnest attempt to refresh readers' memories, by this time in the coverage this information had been reprinted multiple times. These reprints were much to the chagrin of some readers as a February 16 letter to the editor from Rabbi Theodore Lewis expresses. Rabbi Lewis calls the *Times*' decision to continually reprint the slur "unfortunate."

Interestingly, the second half of Gould's editorial on Feb. 2 focuses on conflict resolution steps WBAI could take to help. He praises them for attempting to "more energetically do so." He commends them for championing an "open microphone" and attempts to do "a service to the community."

The Feb. 2 editorial reflects the mixed, complex feelings brought about by this incident. While this editorial focuses on First Amendment issues, rather than the city-wide racial problem, it reflects a mix of anger and wanting to be hopeful. Readers at this point saw this often in reporting on the conflict resolution: extreme anger, blaming, but also wanting to be hopeful and have faith in systematic attempts at resolution.

On Jan. 26 John Kifner explored the issue from the framing of the issue as one between blacks and Jews ("Blacks v. Jews"). Kifner provides context and history of blacks and Jews specifically within the New York City school system. He refrains from repeating most of the inflammatory speeches made previously, only using Albert Vann's quote about the Mayor appeasing Jewish financiers. Kifner challenges readers to consider the bigger picture and understand complex motivations. From the perspective of Pruitt

and Kim, understanding motivation in a conflict can allow for more constructive outcomes.

Kifner's piece from Jan. 26 shows the potential editorials have for calming conflict and providing greater social context to explain the events in a conflict. For example, he does not use active verbs in describing the actions of either group. Rather he points to bigger social issues which he says "triggered" controversy or "pitted" groups of people against each other. When active verbs are used, Kifner uses them to explain the motives behind actions. For example, "Negroes demand control over the schools in the hopes of improving them." Jews "fought hard to form a union, gain respectability and professionalism."

Kifner ends the editorial on Jan. 26 with information not widely covered by the *Times*. "Almost unnoticed in all of this [have] been the large number of young Jewish teachers hired by the experiment(al) Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district." He goes on to describe them as a hopeful generation at the "forefront of the civil rights movement." In the same breath, he reminds readers that older Jews "cannot forget their history" nor does he suggest that they should.

On Feb. 2, Martin Mayer, who wrote a huge piece in mid-February for the *Sunday Times* trying to deconstruct the Ocean Hill-Brownsville issues, wrote a short editorial piece entitled "Meanwhile, back in Ocean Hill..." His thesis, that the parents of the district encourage McCoy to dismiss Campbell, is buried in the last paragraph. The first five paragraphs are each devoted to accusations against the district.

Some of the accusations are valid and warrant investigation, such as the Board of Education paying too high rent for space they might not need. He calls the beginning teachers in the district “utterly incapable of controlling their classes.” He accuses Campbell of having participated in a “riot.” Readers need to know if these are facts and how they impact the city.

The problem with Mayer’s editorial from Feb. 2 is that it throws accusations at readers then does not go into any detail as to what they mean or what is being done about them. He reinforces negative perceptions about Ocean Hill-Brownsville, describing the allegedly worst actions of the people in the district. This type of focus, say Pruitt and Kim, makes it easier for parties to justify aggressive action against or refusal to resolve conflict with others (p. 100.) Unlike Kifner’s editorial which attempted to understand the motivations behind negative actions and behaviors, Mayer’s editorial could function to inflame already frustrated, angry readers.

The last editorial published about the poem appeared on Feb. 3, about mid-way in the coverage cycle (“Race hate and the freedom to teach.”) The poem was the primary focus of Fred Hechinger’s editorial in which he framed the poem as a freedom of speech issue. Hechinger was praised by Fred Ferretti for his coverage of the poem and Ocean Hill-Brownsville (1969.) This particular editorial is similar to Gould’s first piece in that it’s a calm, rational discussion of the First Amendment as it relates to the classroom and educators. Like Gould’s it is not categorized as either constructive or destructive.

Hechinger, in this Feb. 3 editorial, refers to both the poem and Vann’s statements without reprinting them in order to provide context without inflaming readers. He

describes them as “crudely anti-Semitic” and “monstrous indecencies,” making clear his thoughts on the poem and statements. Hechinger does not deny that the First Amendment would “not long survive unless it were upheld in the fact of hot controversy”, but he is most interested in “what did the teacher do to answer the pupil’s hate-filled views?”

Hechinger does not dispute the right to First Amendment protections but takes the stance that Campbell is a teacher first and so must exercise “the right to teach.” If Campbell was not engaged in teaching, he says, then he was engaged in “indoctrination and distortion.” Hechinger believes that “the duty of teachers, regardless of color or faith, is to serve the goals of understanding and reconciliation.”

Campbell’s actions do warrant investigation, Hechinger wisely counsels. He attempts to get at the heart of the matter from an educational standpoint, which he feels is more valid and productive. So while his Feb. 3 editorial, when analyzed by the criteria set, did not fall under either constructive or destructive framing, perhaps the calm tone and asking questions at the center of the conflict do make for constructive framing. Rather than asking “who is to blame,” readers are potentially challenged to ask future-forward questions that could lead to more positive conflict resolution.

**Table 3 Frames in editorials from 1/16/1969-3/29/1969
with incident as primary focus**

| Framing | Destructive Outcome suggested | Constructive Outcome suggested | Neither |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ocean Hill-Brownsville issue | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Racism/anti-Semitism in schools issue | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black-Jewish issue | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| First Amendment issue | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| City-wide racial issue | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1 | 3 | 1 |

Conclusion of the conflict in the *Times*

The final article which covered the FCC’s ruling, and therefore is the last article analyzed, is not categorized as either destructive or constructive (“F.C.C. backs WBAI in reply to protest on anti-Semitism,” Mar. 29.) It is straight-forward reporting of the FCC’s final report stating “it had no authority to judge or act on the broadcast in December” and that the statements were “protected by the guarantee of free speech.” The article goes on to state that the FCC found WBAI fulfilled its responsibility to “present contrasting viewpoints on controversial issues of public importance.”

Neither side is given opportunity to respond to the ruling. There is no mention of the events and tensions of the past few months. The reporter does not mention future steps to

be taken by any of the parties in conflict. This event which was covered in 26 other articles and five editorials is “resolved” in an article on page 71 of the newspaper, buried in other local news. The ruling can be viewed as resolving one aspect of the conflict around the poem, that of WBAI’s responsibility in airing the poem. However, only the parties themselves could truly resolve the conflict in terms of the resulting animosity.

Similarly, the reporting by the *Times* on this particular conflict reflects a focus on destructive escalation and negativity. In reporting on the conflict, the *Times* coverage follows Pruitt and Kim’s model of conflict: escalation, stalemate, and settlement with little emphasis on or follow-up on settlement. Ultimately, the conflict over the poem (and Ocean Hill-Brownsville) is symptomatic of the underlying conflicts between blacks and Jews which scholars such as Greenberg, Friedman, West and Salzman, and Kaufman attempt to deconstruct and analyze.

There is relief in reading the last article on Mar. 29, devoid of inflammatory quotes, “charges,” “demands,” and the jumbling together of events repeated over as symptomatic of larger issues rarely discussed in coverage. The last article is the simplest and most straight-forward. While racial issues brought to surface by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy continued to plague New York City, searches in the *Times* archives do not turn up mention of the poem beyond Mar. 29. It seems an anti-climactic ending to vicious dispute.

Chapter 5

Discussion & Conclusion

More articles and editorials used destructive framing than constructive. The destructive framing was more subtle than overt in nature. The most common uses of destructive outcome framing include emphasis of Jewish voices over blacks, singling out individual behaviors or voices as representative of a group thereby creating potential bias in readers, and emphasis on blaming. The poem shifted in focus from the primary point of an article to the secondary point after the first two weeks of coverage.

Emphasis on Jewish perspectives and singling out black individuals

Jewish leaders, organizations, and individuals were given more voice than black leaders. Leslie Campbell and Julius Lester were not interviewed when the story broke on Jan. 16. The first, and only, mention of trying to contact Campbell for comment occurred on Feb. 5. The reporter stated he was unavailable for comment at the time of publication. And Lester was not quoted until Feb. 7 when comments he gave at a news conference were reprinted by the *Times*. Interestingly, the comments were Lester calmly explaining that he immediately followed the reading of the poem expressing a “hope that rational discussion of the issues that the poem raised would follow” (“Officials of WBAI invited critics to help solve problems of community unrest and racism,” Feb. 7.)

Pruitt and Kim identify positive outcomes of conflict including compromise, integrative resolution that reconciles the two parties’ interests, and agreement on a

procedure for deciding who will win (pp 10-11.) Constructive outcomes are dependent on all conflicted parties being heard. Each side must have the opportunity to air legitimate grievances, offer acceptable solutions, and essentially have a place at the negotiation table.

In the *Times'* coverage of this conflict, such constructive escalation was not the dominant frame. For example, blacks were not portrayed as being heard until later in the conflict when the poem was predominantly the secondary focus of reporting. Initially blacks quoted were self-appointed spokespeople like Albert Vann or Tyrone Woods. Their inflammatory remarks were reprinted repeatedly. As Gitlin noted, the media often allow a small element of a group to take over as representative and remain front-and-center (1980, p. 118.)

The people involved usually become the issue rather than the issue itself, according to Gitlin, (p. 70) as in the case of Campbell, Vann, and Woods. Jewish leaders and individuals were not held up as representative like black individuals involved in the conflict. Even the controversial Meier Kahane who established the militant Jewish Defense League in response to the poem incident was not cast as representative of Jewish voices or behavior. He was viewed as "fringe" and not typical. Yet Campbell, Vann, and Woods as the only black voices heard in the first two weeks of reporting were cast as typical.

Once established, negative attitudes and perceptions tend to endure, according to Pruitt and Kim (p. 107) and contribute to destructive escalation. Entman found that schemas established in reporting early on tend to endure and cloud reader perspectives

even after they are no longer used (p. 7.) First impressions, he says, are difficult to dislodge (ibid.) While reporting ceased to reprint the comments of Vann, Campbell, and Woods after two weeks of coverage, the schema of fringe black voices as representative of all black voices was potentially established for readers. Potentially this established schema could have been coupled with negative attitudes towards the Ocean Hill-Brownsville party. While their comments and the poem were no longer reprinted after two weeks, they were still referred to in reporting as examples of the city-wide racial issues. Readers only had to recall previous knowledge from their established schema to understand the references.

Pruitt and Kim also note that established negative perceptions and attitudes lead to selective perception, the tendency to see only those things that reinforce established ideas and make blame easier (p. 107.) When conflict resolution efforts on the part of blacks and non-fringe black voices were heard, some readers might have trouble reconciling these reports with the established negative perceptions. As seen in the article covering Ocean Hill-Brownsville administrator McCoy's suggestions for "positive action," he makes "demands" and "charges." The black voices are still contentious and problematic.

The positive black voices heard after the initial two weeks of coverage are voices removed from the conflict itself. While Lester was advising calm and encouraging discussion of the bigger issues on his show, this was not reported. No one from the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district was interviewed. Neither Woods nor Vann were asked about their oft-repeated statements.

The black voices heard are predominantly those of clergy and intellectuals not tied directly to the conflict or Ocean Hill-Brownsville. While Vann and Woods potentially would not contribute constructively to conflict resolution, the impression gleaned from the *Times* is that positive conflict resolution efforts came from the Mayor's office and in cooperation with black clergy only. For example, Julius Lester attempted to engage the conflicting parties in efforts at reconciliation as the conflict escalated. His activities, such as hosting dialogues about the poem on his radio show (Lester), were not covered by the *Times*. Readers cannot tell if this is a true representation of black engagement in conflict resolution or what Gitlin refers to as the media opening some doors and closing others (p. 127) regarding which elements of a group get to speak.

Emphasis on blaming

Blaming emerged as the most commonly-emphasized element of destructive outcome framing in the coverage. Pruitt and Kim noted research studies that found people were more likely to blame conflict on groups they disliked or saw as threatening (p. 107). In using blame, groups assign not only responsibility to conflict, but also interpretation for actions (p. 108.)

Blame promotes the sense of Otherness of the opposing side by showing them to be morally inferior and dissimilar to oneself (p. 108) which reduces empathy and could promote diminished inhibitions against retaliation. Further, the easy explanation for their actions is that they stem from evil motives, according to Pruitt and Kim. Blaming blocks

insight into understanding behavior and motives. Further it could make one party unaware of its role in encouraging the other to aggress (p. 109.)

In printing and reprinting quotes that lay blame for the poem incident, the *Times* did not leave room for exploring the deeper issues from which the poem sprang and was mired in. Later articles did explore the deeper issues, but usually from the Jewish perspective or through Jewish voices, even when commenting on the real struggles of blacks. In stepping back and analyzing the coverage, one can almost agree with Albert Vann when he noted that injustices against blacks occurred everyday and were not reported with the same emphasis.

Analysis of constructive outcome frames

The most commonly employed frames that suggested constructive outcomes were the emphasis of bonds between parties and the inclusion of positive black voices. Just as the destructive escalation frames used were subtle, so were the constructive escalation frames.

When bonds between the parties were emphasized, they were usually still discussed using the language of conflict. For example, in describing meetings hosted by the Mayor in mid-February to discuss the poem and resulting racial issues, the Reverend James Gusweller, a “West Side community leader,” says “they were very good confrontations, always amicable at the end.”

In reporting on meetings between blacks, Jews, and city officials, the *Times* framed suggesting constructive outcomes, even if the language used was not so hopeful. Pruitt

and Kim argue that direct contact and communication between parties opens the door for beneficial de-escalation of a conflict by permitting problem-solving and potentially allowing parties to view the other as suffering from the conflict, too (p. 181.) They can contribute to understanding each other motives, such as when the *Times* reported on meetings in which black and Jewish clergy shared their truth about black-Jewish relations (Jan. 31 and Feb. 22) and discussed their perspective on the greater issues brought up by the poem.

Looking at Pruitt and Kim's theory on conflict, facing truth about the past is an important step in settling conflict (p. 218.) Therefore, these types of statements cannot be automatically categorized as destructive elements. It is important to view them in the overall context provided by the article. If grievances were reported within the context of conflict resolution efforts and meetings, they could be categorized as leading to potentially constructive outcomes. If grievances were reported in a context of blaming, they were more likely framing destructive outcomes. Recounting one's suffering publicly can be an opportunity to heal and move on (p. 218.)

When bonds between the parties were emphasized, they were often voiced by the Jewish community. In three articles, Jews were urged by Jewish leaders and organizations to continue support of black civil rights and try to understand the poem from the perspective of being an Other. So while this type of constructive framing was used, it focused primarily on the Jewish perspective. Jews were told to stop overreacting and keep calm by their leaders in the press. Jews told other Jews to remember the bonds between themselves and blacks.

Blacks were largely absent from these conversations in the coverage. Readers are left with the sense that Jews “owned” or controlled the issue. And based on the previous characterizations of blacks in the coverage, this might not be a bad or unfair thing in the minds of readers.

Significance of findings

Reporters must use frames to process and structure large amounts of information about single events that usually speak to larger social issues, such as in this case. The findings from this study are important in examining how conflict is reported and framed for readers. In particular, the findings from this study support Gitlin’s ideas about the destructive nature of certain trends in reporting, particularly on conflict.

Gitlin warns of the dangers of promoting exceptional events over explaining the sources of these events in everyday life (p. 185). He described how coverage could open doors for some groups and close them for others (p. 127). And he discussed how self-appointed spokespeople and selective promotion of certain groups/individuals over others could lead to extreme elements of a group portrayed as representative which undercut rational and responsible wings of movements and groups.

The *Times* coverage of this incident did not use enough balanced sources early on to add context and humanize both sides. Blacks were not given a voice in or ownership over the issue until two weeks into the coverage. While detailed reporting takes time, resources, and energy not often realistic in the business, the *Times* did not fulfill its obligation to present both sides of the conflict from the beginning. It is unclear if this

omission might have been glaring to readers who did not hear Lester or Campbell's side, but who were able to reread selections from the poem five times by Jan. 23.

The significance of this study extends only as far as positing what could have been suggested to readers. Because of the historical nature of the topic, it could not be determined what conclusions about the conflict readers actually drew. This study did not set out to determine readers' thoughts, but rather to examine coverage for potential issues from which contemporary reporters of conflict could learn.

This event did deserve coverage. The poem was clearly racist and controversial. The press was obligated to report on this incident and to print the poem at least once for its readers. Vann, Campbell, and Woods are problematic individuals who inflamed the conflict with their statements and actions. The *Times* established a potentially destructive frame during the first two weeks of its coverage in the elements emphasized and given voice.

Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley found that word choices reporters used in covering controversial issues could result in substantially different portrayals of the same event (1997.) Further, these choices could influence people's opinions about. Therefore, framing quotes as "demands" or "charges" versus "urgings" or "assertions" could impact how conflict is viewed by readers. Careful word choices and the use of alternative sources have the potential to promote a better understanding of sides in a conflict and the nature of that conflict.

Tuchman says that the news is the ally of legitimated institutions (1978). News often represents the power and authority of institutionalized structures. She points to coverage

of the women's movement to show which groups and individuals have access to their voice being heard in the news. In reporting on conflict, news outlets such as the *Times* need to pay close attention to this tendency. Such coverage can result in imbalanced portrayals of both a conflict and its parties. For positive resolution to take place, space must be given for each side to air grievances, explain their motivations, and have the opportunity to view the other in more empathetic ways.

Opportunities for future research

This study examined a specific historical conflict and was limited to one U.S. newspaper. It identified frames used to explain the incident and categorized them as destructive, constructive, or neither in terms of outcomes. The articles and editorials were analyzed from a qualitative perspective by examining for qualities related to either destructive or constructive conflict outcomes based on Pruitt and Kim's theory of conflict.

Audience impact could not be studied because of the historical nature of the topic. Rather, this study aimed to examine how to apply the theories of Pruitt and Kim to understand conflict reporting. To gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which conflict is reported affects audiences, future researchers could examine a current conflict over a longer period of time and examine the ways in which a controlled group of readers respond to the coverage in terms of their understanding of a conflict and its parties.

It would also be interesting to examine the ways in which publications representing specific sides of a conflict contribute to conflict resolution and impact their very specific

audiences. For example, this study could have compared coverage of the poem incident in a Jewish newspaper and African-American paper, such as the *Amsterdam News*.

Hopefully, by examining how coverage of a conflict could potentially inflame or calm that conflict will contribute to a greater conversation about how journalists can constructively report. Conflict warrants reporting. Incidents such as this poem must face the scrutiny of journalists. However, they cannot be viewed outside of their context of origin if vicious circles are to be unbroken. Further, while journalists strive to achieve balanced coverage, it is most crucial in covering conflict that the parties are given the chance to explain their motivations and make themselves appear wholly human rather than stereotypes. In dehumanizing others or silencing voices, we limit the possibility for positive, peaceful resolution.

APPENDIX

Table 4 Coding of all articles from 1/16/1969-3/29/1969

| Date | Headline | Author | Poem primary or secondary focus? | Framing Issue | Outcome suggested |
|-------------|--|----------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| Jan. 16 | Teachers protest poem to FCC | Raymont, Henry | Primary | Anti-Semitism in Ocean Hill-Brownsville | Destructive |
| Jan. 18 | Board is asked to oust teacher over poem called anti-Semitic | Buder, Leonard | Primary | Ocean Hill-Brownsville school crisis issue | Destructive |
| Jan. 19 | Mayor requests inquiry into racism | None given | Secondary | Racism in schools | Destructive |
| Jan. 20 | Mayor assailed on disputed poem | Faber, M.A. | Primary | Racism in schools | Destructive |
| Jan. 21 | WBAI aide rejects Shanker's charge of anti-Semitism | None given | Primary | First Amendment | Destructive |
| Jan. 23 | WBAI plans to put its critics on air | None given | Primary | First Amendment | Constructive |
| Jan. 23 | Two teachers' cases sent to Donovan | Buder, Leonard | Primary | Ocean Hill-Brownsville school issue | Destructive |
| Jan. 24 | Schoolgirl's poem defended by youths on WBAI program | None given | Primary | Anti-Semitism in Ocean Hill-Brownsville | Destructive |
| Jan. 25 | Outcry growing against bigotry | Brady, Thomas | Primary | City-wide racial issue | Destructive |

| | | | | | |
|---------|--|------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Jan. 26 | Jews debating black anti-Semitism | Raymont, Henry | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Destructive |
| Jan. 28 | Parley on racism pressed by Smith | Brady, Thomas | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Constructive |
| Jan. 28 | WBAI rejects Jewish group's demands on anti-Semitism | None given | Primary | First Amendment | Neither |
| Jan. 30 | Celler asks F.C.C. action | AP wire story | Primary | First Amendment | Neither |
| Jan. 31 | Museum withdraws catalogue attacked as a slur on Jews | Kihss, Peter | Secondary | City-wide racial issues | Destructive |
| Jan. 31 | 50 rabbis and Negro clergymen searching for racial peace | Shenker, Israel | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Constructive |
| Feb. 2 | McCoy won't act on anti-Semitism | Lissner, Will | Secondary | Ocean Hill-Brownsville school issue | Destructive |
| Feb. 3 | Reform leaders fear some Jews are overreacting to slur | Carroll, Maurice | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Destructive |
| Feb. 5 | State unit to hear J.H.S. 271 charges involving Campbell | None given | Secondary | Ocean Hill-Brownsville school issue | Neither |
| Feb. 7 | Officials of WBAI invite critics to help solve problems of community unrest and racism | Gent, George | Primary | First Amendment | Constructive |
| Feb. 7 | Golar promises to combat 'All kinds of racism' | Bennett, Charles | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Constructive |

| | | | | | |
|---------|--|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Feb. 8 | Back civil rights, Jews are urged | Dugan, George | Secondary | Black-Jewish issue | Constructive |
| Feb. 10 | Churchman scores rabbis' demands | Dugan, George | Secondary | Black-Jewish issue | Constructive |
| Feb. 22 | Racial exchanges mar bias talks of leaders here | Tochin, Martin | Secondary | City-wide racial issue | Constructive |
| Mar. 4 | 7 youths seized in school melee | Buder, Leonard | Secondary | Racial issue in schools | Destructive |
| Mar. 25 | High Court refuses radio bias protest | None given | Secondary | First Amendment | Neither |
| Mar. 29 | F.C.C. backs WBAI in reply to protest on anti-Semitism | None given | Primary | First Amendment | Neither |

Table 5 Coding of all editorials from 1/16/1969-3/29/1969

| Date | Headline | Author | Poem primary or secondary focus? | Framing Issue | Outcome suggested |
|-------------|---|--------------------|---|--|------------------------------|
| Jan. 25 | Radio: The WBAI case and the F.C.C. | Gould, Jack | Primary | First Amendment | Neither |
| Jan. 26 | Blacks vs. Jews | Kifner, John | Primary | Black-Jewish issue | Constructive |
| Feb. 2 | Free speech and the right to abuse it | Gould, Jack | Primary | First Amendment | Destructive |
| Feb. 2 | Meantime, back in Ocean hill | Mayer, Martin | Secondary | Ocean Hill- Brownsville school issue | Destructive |
| Feb. 3 | Race hate and the freedom to teach | Hechinger, Fred | Primary | First Amendment | Neither |
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