Racial Proxies in Daily News: A Case Study of the Use of Directional Euphemisms

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Abstract

This study examines the extent of the use of geographic code words in place of racial terms in daily news reporting. This is a case study of the only daily newspaper, the Toledo *Blade*, in the midwestern city of Toledo, Ohio. A data set was constructed by searching a nine year collection of *Blade* articles, available in full-text searchable format in a ProQuest database, that included the most frequently used directional terms and had specific street addresses (a total of 981 stories). Besides bibliographic data, each story was coded for its location and the general nature of the story. Street addresses were used to compile relevant census tract information on the proportion of minorities in each area referenced. These references were then plotted over a street map of Toledo revealing geographic distributions that do not relate to actual cardinal directions. Population data corresponding to each data point was then analyzed to show that directional terminology correlates with the concentration of minority population. Additionally, a comprehensive content analysis of all 21,667 Blade articles published in this period revealed racial differences in reporting. Such quantified observations are reinforced by examination of particular examples of racialized usage of geographic terms.

"...names...construct social reality as much as they express it…" [Bourdieu 1989]

The headline in the Toledo *Blade* marked a senseless tragedy, "Police ID apparent hit-skip victim, suspect; Body of Theresa James found early today in West Toledo" (*Blade*, Feb. 21, 2014). According to the news story, twenty-six year old Ms. James was run down while walking alone late at night along a road that had no sidewalks. According to the *Blade* her body was discovered in "West Toledo" and Ms. James lived in a neighborhood the newspaper described as "North Toledo." Curiously, her house in "North Toledo" was about two miles due south (and somewhat west) of where she was killed in "West Toledo." [1]

How was it that "North Toledo" lay south of "West Toledo" according to the newspaper of record in Northwest Ohio? Clearly the papers' use of these terms is not strictly based on the points of a compass. Neither is it based on the city's official nomenclature for its dozens of neighborhoods. According to the city's published neighborhood designations, Ms. James was run down in a part of Toledo called "North Towne" and she lived in a neighborhood called "Lagrange." According to the official directory, there are no neighborhoods named either "West Toledo" or "North Toledo" in the city (*City of Toledo Consolidated Plan*).[1] If these terms are not meant to refer to actual places or to geography, then they must relate to some other sort of colloquial meaning or common local usage. The question is, what do such terms as "North Toledo" or "West Toledo" mean? [2]

One important aspect of this sad story is that Ms. James was a black woman who lost her life in a white neighborhood. The area where Ms. James was killed, referred to by the local newspaper as "West Toledo," is about four-fifths white and one-tenth black. The community where Ms. James' lived in "North Toledo" is a mirror image of the one where she perished, four-fifths black and one-tenth white.[2] These demographic facts made the mismatch between Ms. James [3]

race and the location of her accident part of the story that readers would have wanted to read and that the newspaper wanted to report. However, modern journalistic conventions did not permit race to be a prominent part of a story in which race was not an obvious element of the crime. The continuing widespread public belief in the relevance of race alongside journalistic standards that prohibit racial reporting has led to the use of various proxy terms to indicate race. In Toledo this has led to the adoption of directional terms as euphemisms for race.

For much of the Twentieth Century reporting on African Americans was largely limited to stories emphasizing black criminality [Keever et al 1997] [Daly 1968] [Simpson 1936] [Beatty-Brown et al 1951]. This pattern changed slowly with the successes of the Civil Rights movement so that by the 1970s most major newspapers included more positive public interest stories about African Americans and black neighborhoods. Nevertheless, most newspapers continued to be more likely to print stories aligned with racial stereotypes than those counter to them [Martindale 1985] [Martindale 1986] [Martindale 1990a] [Martindale 1990b] [Pease 1989] [Pritchard 1985]. | 4

Well into the Civil Rights era it was still common for most newspapers, including the *Blade* to routinely indicate whether the subject of a story was a "negro" or to clarify that the subject was "white" or "caucasian" when the context was unclear.[3] While this journalistic practice faded in the 1970s and 1980s, readers' beliefs that this information was highly relevant did not. Today journalistic standards preclude the use of racial terms except in "biographical and announcement stories," in cases where suspects or missing persons are sought and racial descriptors are relevant, or "when reporting a demonstration or disturbance involving race" [Kovach et al 2001].[4] | 5

Thus has arisen a deep journalistic dilemma. Colorblind standards of news reporting restrain responsible journalists from routinely identifying their subjects by race. Meanwhile, public attitudes, especially those of whites, equate blackness with criminality and through this lens view race as relevant to every crime story [Sentencing Project 2015]. Pinched between the two tines of a vice of their journalistic ethics and a widespread racial frame through which readers view news, some journalists have resorted to the routine use of proxy terms to indicate race without actually employing racial terms. | 6

Among the most common of these racial proxy terms are those that substitute geographic for racial identifiers. Because American cities are highly segregated by race (and in many instances increasingly so), descriptions of a subject's neighborhood could often function as a proxy for race. For instance, "Harlem" served this function in Manhattan, "the South Side" for Chicago, and "Watts" or "Compton" for Los Angeles. In the case of Toledo, geographic terminology had to be invented before it could be deployed to journalistically mark race. | 7

Toledo's demographics do not permit the simple use of a single neighborhood name as a proxy for race. Toledo's black community is not concentrated in any one neighborhood but extends diagonally in a broad band across the middle of the city. Predominantly white neighborhoods are scattered on the city's periphery, with the largest populations to the west, south, and north of the city. (See Figure 1) This demographic pattern that bisected the city required either the wholesale invention of a new set of geographic terms, such as "middle" or "central," or the stretching of existing directional terms beyond both their historical meanings and their actual relation to the compass. | 8
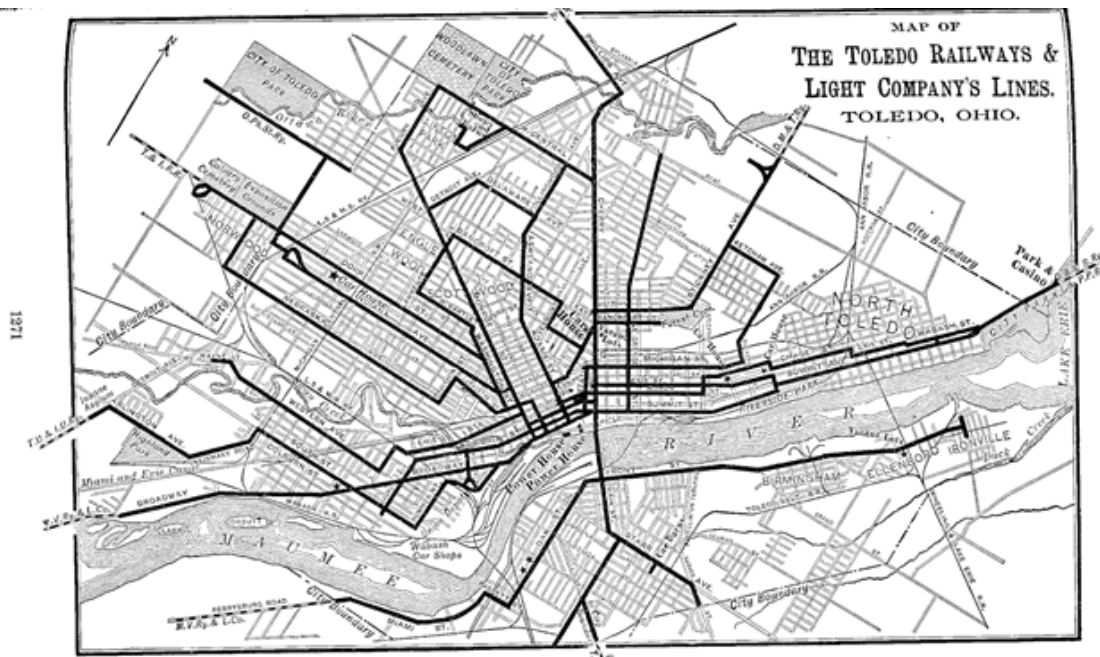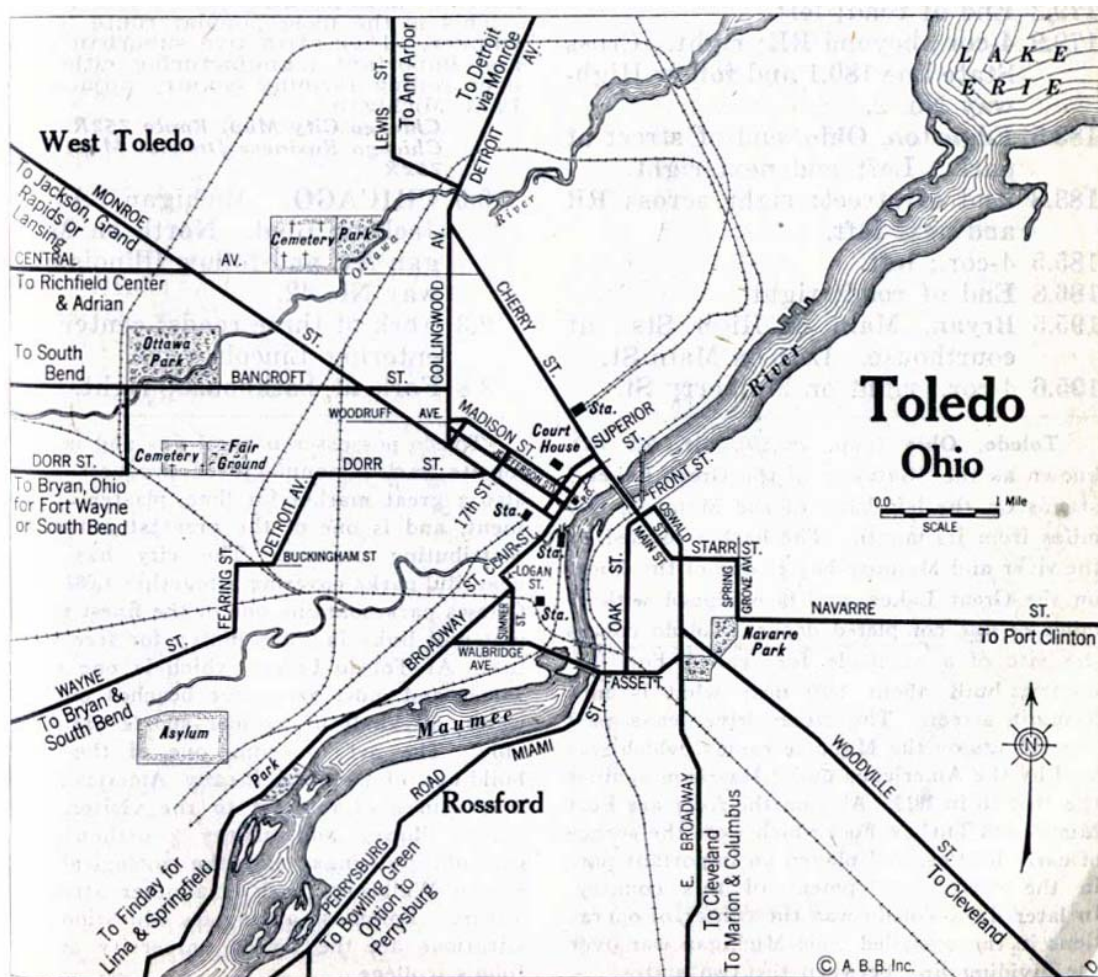
Figure 1. Distribution of Nonwhite Population, Toledo, Ohio, 2000.[5]

Complicating the easy substitution of place names or directional references for racial descriptors was the fact that two significant directional terms were historically misaligned with cardinal directions. When they were first coined, neither "North Toledo" nor "West Toledo" were actually north or west of the city. North Toledo was originally a suburban neighborhood that grew up in the 1890s around the terminus of an early streetcar line about two miles east and north of the center of the city along the Maumee river (See Figure 2). Likewise, "West Toledo" was originally the name of a suburban development platted in the first decade of the Twentieth century to the north and west of a neighborhood that had long been known as the "West End" (today commonly referred to as the "Old West End"). (See Figure 3). From their origins, these neighborhoods were misaligned with their actual geographic namesakes by about forty-five degrees. This original misalignment would later give license to a wholesale unmooring of these terms from compass points altogether.

Figure 2. Toledo 1897[6]

Figure 3. Toledo 1917[7]

Toledo's racial housing patterns were established during the housing boom of the 1920s when a flurry of suburban

developments were constructed with racially restrictive deeds prohibiting sales to "Negroes" [Messer-Kruse 2005]. While most of Toledo's relatively small but growing black population had no choice but to live in a handful of integrated downtown districts, their neighboring whites enjoyed increasing opportunities to relocate to all-white suburbs. During the New Deal the federal government constructed subsidized segregated housing in Toledo and underwrote a mortgage industry while prohibiting the writing of subsidized loans in integrated neighborhoods. Such policies effectively constructed majority black ghettos out of previously ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

Though the black population of Toledo rapidly increased after World War II, the housing stock available to black families did not. From 1940 to 1950 the black population increased by nearly three-quarters while housing units increased by less than one quarter. Due to the pervasive housing discrimination practiced by landlords, banks, and realtors, black neighborhoods grew in density and population much faster than they grew in area, becoming progressively less diverse over time [McKee 1963] [Sears 1988].

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Whites in Toledo consciously nurtured the segregation of their city over many decades. In the 1950s white Toledoans responded to the rising black population by repealing the city's decade-old fair housing ordinance in a popular referendum [Miller 1965]. When pressure mounted for the city's public schools to integrate in the 1960s, city officials ceded its largest white working class district to a newly chartered township created for the purpose of establishing a separate white school district. So stubbornly did Toledo's leaders cling to discriminatory policies that in the 1970s Nixon's Department of Housing and Urban Development quietly cut funding to the city because of its continuing practice of funelling federal housing subsidies meant for black neighborhoods to white ones [Danielson 1976]. As recently as 2000, strong patterns of housing discrimination by race have been readily documented by various studies that have uncovered strong price disparities for housing along racial lines in Toledo and large differences in bank approval rates for mortgages between whites and blacks of equal economic standing [Brasington et al 2015] [Coffey et al 1998].

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## Survey of Contemporary Directional Terminology

Today the use of directional terms is nearly ubiquitous in the *Blade*. Of approximately 188,550 articles in the paper between November 2005 and November 2014, 21,667 or eleven percent, reference a directional term.[8] Of concern here is not simply the overall frequency of the use of these terms but their meaning: do they actually convey geographic information or do they instead signal racial meaning? To gauge the degree that the terms are used either directionally or racially, a data set was compiled by searching a nine year collection of *Blade* articles for the terms "north," "west," "south," "east," and "central" Toledo. For each story that used one of these directional references, full bibliographic data and the street address of its subject was recorded (nearly five percent of the total number of such directional references in the *Blade* during that span of time contained specific addresses).[9]

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By plotting these directional references onto a map, the extent and consistency of the usage of these terms can be analyzed. (See Figure 4) While nearly all of the references to "West Toledo" are in the western half of the city, most of them are also in its northern half. In fact, the number of references to "West Toledo" in the northern half of the city vastly outnumber the number of references to "North Toledo." Overall, a significant majority of the places called "West Toledo" are in fact more northern than the places called "North Toledo."

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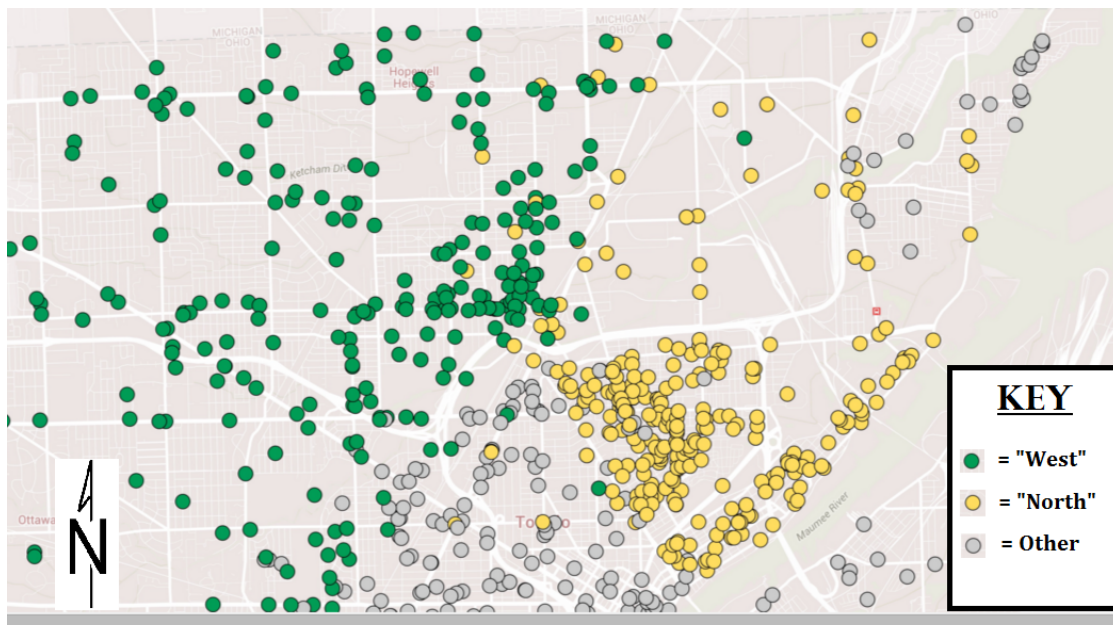
Figure 4. Location of References to "North" and "West," Toledo *Blade*, Nov. 2005 to Nov. 2014[10]

"North Toledo" seems the most inaccurately named region, most of it extending along the eastern third of a central axis of the city, south of the I-75 interstate highway. Much of the region extending north of that same line is highly inconsistent in its nomenclature. Locations described as both "North Toledo" and "West Toledo" are jumbled together, especially in the neighborhoods bordering Detroit avenue that, while being clearly in the northern quadrant of the city, are majority white working class communities.

In addition to the cardinal directions, the *Blade* additionally refers to some subjects as being part of "Central Toledo" or the "Central City." This is a geographically consistent area, as most of the references to it indeed fall in the central area of a map of the city. But while occupying an appropriate area it is also the least coherent area as a wide band of its boundaries are intermixed with other neighborhoods that the newspaper references as "Downtown," "the Old West End," as well as with "West Toledo" (See Figure 5).

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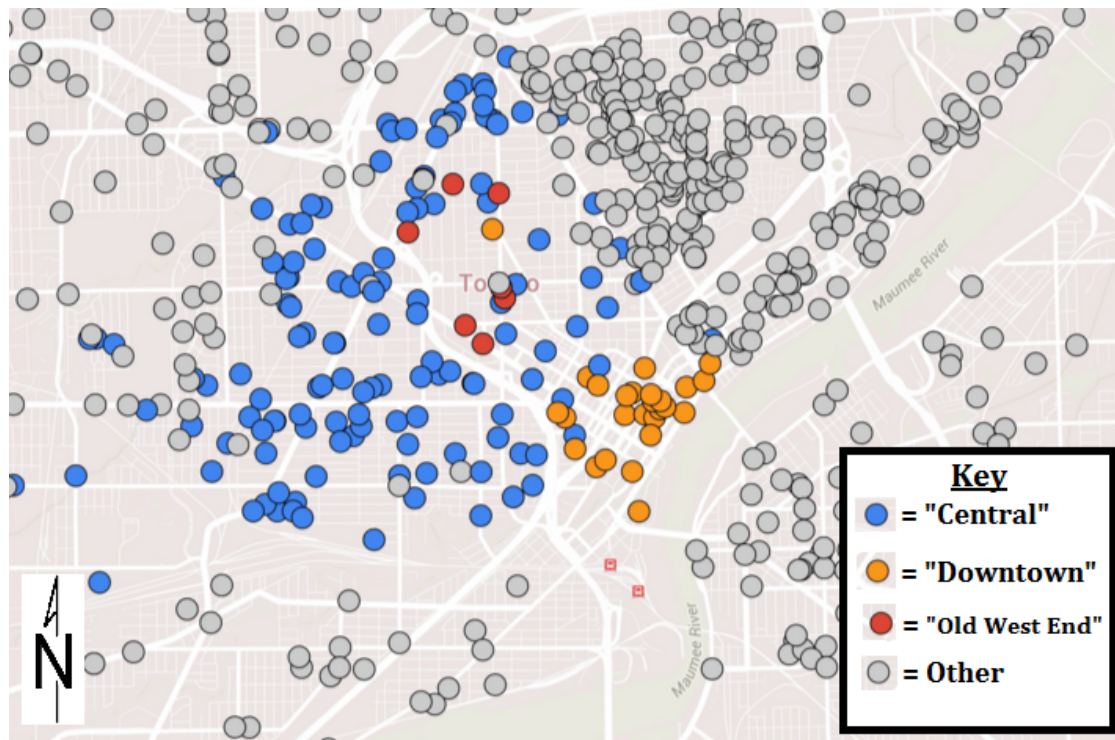
Figure 5. Location of References to "Central," "Downtown," and "Old West End," Toledo *Blade*, Nov. 2005 to Nov. 2014.[11]

The inconsistency of the application of these geographic terms, especially "North" and "West" Toledo, cannot be explained by reference to their historical origins. The original "North Toledo" was considerably east of the city and over a century migrated west and north. West Toledo was originally located in the northwestern area of the city and expanded both north, east and south to cover the largest area of any directional reference. "Central Toledo" or the "Central City" does not appear to have been employed for any purpose prior to the 1960s.

While the organization of these terms cannot be fully accounted for by geography or history, they do correlate highly with the segregated racial demographics of the city. To illustrate the overlap of these directional references and racial demographics, the specific location of each directional reference mentioned in the Toledo *Blade* from November of 2005 to November of 2014 was compared with the percentage of minority population in its associated census tract (See Table 1).

	N	% tracts over 50% nonwhite	mean % nonwhite
West	306	14.71	27.53
North	352	81.81	61.96
Central	140	100	86.68
East	63	0	33.8
South	49	40.82	46.72

Table 1. Nonwhite Population of Toldeo Census Tracts by Directional Reference

It is apparent from these figures that each of these directional terms, while not particularly effective as terms of direction, are effective at indicating each location's proportion of racial minorities. Fewer than 15% of the places described as being in "West Toledo" have a majority nonwhite population compared with 82% of places described as "North Toledo" and 100% of those called "Central Toledo."

Anomalies of Nomenclature

While Toledo has dozens of neighborhoods known by name, the *Blade* regularly refers to only a handful of such neighborhoods, rolling the rest into its larger directional rubrics. Three small neighborhoods in particular are regularly referenced by their names rather than by the larger directionally-designated areas ("North," "West," etc.) that they are within. All three of these neighborhoods are white enclaves within communities of color.

A spit of land extending into Maumee Bay in the extreme northeastern part of the city known as "Point Place," is usually indicated by this name rather than as being part of "North Toledo." Unlike "North Toledo," the neighborhood described as "Point Place" is overwhelmingly white. The boundary between "North Toledo" and "Point Place" is very ill-defined as the newspaper variously includes references to either place across a several square mile area in its vicinity.[12]

One white community, located in the heart of what is referred to as "North Toledo," is routinely named separately from the black community that surrounds it. Rather, it is designated as the "Polish Village." Typical is the headline, "Bank Branch Razed In Polish Village" that reported on a building at the corner of Lagrange and Central avenues (*Blade*, Mar. 18, 2010]). Sometimes the relationship between "Polish Village" and the surrounding neighborhood is described, such as in "North Toledo's Polish Village section" (*Blade*, July 20, 2008]). In other articles the distinction between the two is made more certain, as in "Polish Village and adjoining parts of northern Toledo" (*Blade*, Mar. 28, 2006). Generally, white residents of this neighborhood are reported as living in "Polish Village" while their black neighbors are described as living in "North Toledo."

Likewise, the only neighborhood within the predominantly black region called "Central Toledo" that has a significant white population is inconsistently referred to by the *Blade* by its historic neighborhood name of the "Old West End." When a bus driver pulled over his bus and rushed to save a suicidal woman he was in "Central Toledo," but the Rosary cathedral next door is usually described as towering in the "Old West End" (*Blade*, Mar. 29, 2013; Apr. 9, 2007]). Likewise the mostly white St. Mark's Episcopal church is usually noted as being an Old West End landmark but the black Thomas Temple Church, just down a long block on Ashland Avenue, is in the "central city" (*Blade*, Jun 28, 2008; Dec. 26, 2008]). The Warren AME church, also on Collingwood avenue, whose congregation is mostly African American, stands in the "central city"[13] One mile north on Collingwood avenue stands the First Unitarian church, whose pews are mostly filled with white parishioners, but First Unitarian, like the other stately churches on surrounding corners, are rarely described as being in "central" Toledo. First Unitarian is mentioned as being in the Old West End or even as a "downtown" church (*Blade*, July 27, 2008]). However, these practices are not entirely consistent. The Bibleway Temple Church, across the street, was reported as being in the Old West End when it held a mass memorial service for victims of violence. (*Blade*, Nov. 9, 2006).

Over years of reporting on Toledo's neighborhoods the *Blade* has developed a repertoire of terms that can be applied interchangeably to those neighborhoods where whites and blacks live in nearly equal numbers. Toledo institutions that are overwhelmingly white, such as the Toledo Club, though surrounded by locations referred to as the "central city" or "central Toledo" are rarely referred to as being in such a place. Rather they are described as being "downtown" (*Blade*, July 29, 2007; Apr. 29, 2006; Feb. 5, 2008; May 11, 2009; May 18, 2008]). 13th street is a cross-street that is almost always described as bisecting downtown, except at its southernmost point where a large public housing complex sits near the corner of Washington and Indiana streets. The Port Lawrence Homes, described as being in the "central city," are one block from the "downtown" Easystreet Cafe and next door to the "downtown" historic St. Patrick's church (*Blade*, Aug. 28, 2010; Dec. 27, 2011; Nov. 16, 2013; Mar. 17, 2007). Though, occasionally, Port Lawrence Homes is noted as being "near downtown" (*Blade*, Jan. 2013). Cherry street is the usual boundary of the downtown, but the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox church which stands on the far side of Cherry street from the downtown (and therefore is in "North Toledo"), is usually described as being in "downtown" Toledo (*Blade*, Sep. 6, 2007; Sep. 7, 2014; Apr. 30, 2011; June 26, 2010; Sep. 4, 2008).[14]

Such discrepancies in the use of directional terms have not gone completely without notice by readers of the *Blade*. One *Blade* reader wrote to the paper in 2010: "Exactly where is central Toledo? Toledo media have been racial-profiling for years by using the terms 'central city' and 'central Toledo.' The media use these terms to identify race. If this is not true, someone should inform the public where central Toledo and the central city are located, by ZIP Code or precinct" (*Blade*, July 21, 2010]).

Similar anomalies are evident in neighborhoods to the west of the city. The Westmoreland neighborhood is generally described as being in "West Toledo," though when a shooting occurred west of this area, in another "West Toledo" neighborhood, its location was referred to as being in "Central" Toledo (*Blade*, Aug. 18, 2014; Mar. 21, 2010). Likewise a series of strong-arm robberies that occurred a few blocks further west were also referred to as having taken place in the "central city" (*Blade*, Sept. 8, 2012). Westwood Avenue, like its name suggests, is usually considered in "West" Toledo but when a strangled body was found in the trunk of a car in a tow lot there it was reported as being found in "Central Toledo" (*Blade*, Mar. 2, 2006). The Village Players Theater, where mostly white local amateur thespians put on productions, is consistently referred to as being in "West Toledo," but the convenience mart a couple of doors down on the corner of the same block was in "Central Toledo" when it was held up (*Blade*, Sept. 6, 2007).

The Journalistic Function of Racial Euphemism

The use of geographic euphemisms is a characteristic feature of racism in the Twenty-first century. Racism requires that race be marked as meaningful in public discussions but this marking has also to be deniably race-neutral on its face to be consistent with the myth that America is a color-blind society. Thus, in addition to using geographic terms to refer to areas of the city, the *Blade* routinely uses "North Toledo" or "Central Toledo" in order to identify something or someone as Black, and "West Toledo" when it wants to mark it or them as White. The whole system of geographic euphemism results in the systematic racial mapping of the community.

These patterns are evident not only from the anecdotal disparities in directional terms applied to the same neighborhoods, as noted above, but from the overall pattern of stories found in the last nine year run of the paper. Since November of 2006, 21,667 Toledo *Blade* stories containing directional references to north, east, south, or west have been archived in the ProQuest Newsstand database. Approximately one in five of the stories that included directional references associated with predominantly white areas (west, south, and east) also included terms that indicated some act of violence (shot, shooting, robbery, stabbing, rape, murder, beating, arson). However, the frequency of similar references to violent crimes were far higher for those directional references associated with majority black neighborhoods (north and central). Compared with "West Toledo" the rate of reference to violent crimes was nearly fifty percent higher for "North Toledo" and for "Central Toledo." (See Table 2).

While disparities in crime reporting by neighborhood could be function of higher crime rates in those neighborhoods most frequently identified by directional references, crime rate data for Toledo does not support this hypothesis. A comparable crime rate for each directional section of the city was calculated by averaging together the overall crime rate of the census tract containing each specific street address mentioned in a *Blade* story. While the number of stories involving crimes identified as taking place in "North" Toledo was twice that of similar stories in "West" Toledo, overall crime rates in the locations referenced in those stories was less than 10% greater than crime rates in the "West." Likewise, twice as many crime stories were located in the "Central" city while the average crime rates of all the locations mentioned was less than 10% greater than those parts of the "West" city deemed newsworthy. Such results point to the greater likelihood that a story will include reference to a majority black community (by way of directional proxy) if the story includes a crime.

	Total References	Crime Stories	% Crime Stories	Crime Rate
North	2971	1066	36	269
West	4776	850	18	245
East	3988	819	21	294
South	4372	1032	24	267
Central	2062	756	37	245

Table 2. Proportion of Crime Stories Among Stories With Directional References, Toldeo *Blade*, Nov. 2005 to Nov. 2014.[15]

Additionally, there is a clear disparity in the proportion of crime stories that employ directional terms as personal

adjectives between white and black neighborhoods (See Table 3). Far fewer crime stories, as a proportion of overall stories, refer to a "West Toledo man" or a "West Toledo woman" than use directions as an adjective to refer to other areas of the city. Use of the personal adjectival form was two and half times more common for references to men or women of "Central Toledo" than of "West Toledo." This would seem to indicate that the association of particular people with particular areas of the city, thereby marking them by race, was much more common for people from majority African American communities than those from majority white ones.

	Total References	Personal Adjective	%
North Toledo	2971	99	3.33
West Toledo	4776	88	1.84
East Toledo	3988	120	3.01
South Toledo	4372	149	3.41
Central Toledo or Central City	2062	100	4.85

Table 3. Proportion of Stories Employing Personal Adjectives with Directional References, Toledo *Blade*, Nov. 2005 to Nov. 2014.[16]

The Rise of Directional Racial Proxies

The current pattern of use of directional proxies for race seems to have arisen in fairly recent times. Judging by the frequency of a sample of stories found through a search of issues of the Toledo *Blade* archived by Google, the practice of using directional references increased dramatically beginning in the 1970s. While references to North Toledo increased modestly, those for West Toledo saw a significant jump beginning in the 1970s and continuing for the next twenty years. The term "Central Toledo" or "Central City" seems to only have come into infrequent usage beginning in the 1960s and became common in the 1990s. Likewise, older names for smaller white neighborhoods located within "North" or "Central" Toledo, such as Point Place, the Old West End, and especially Polish Village, seem to all have jumped in usage in the 1990s.[17] (See Figures 6 & 7).
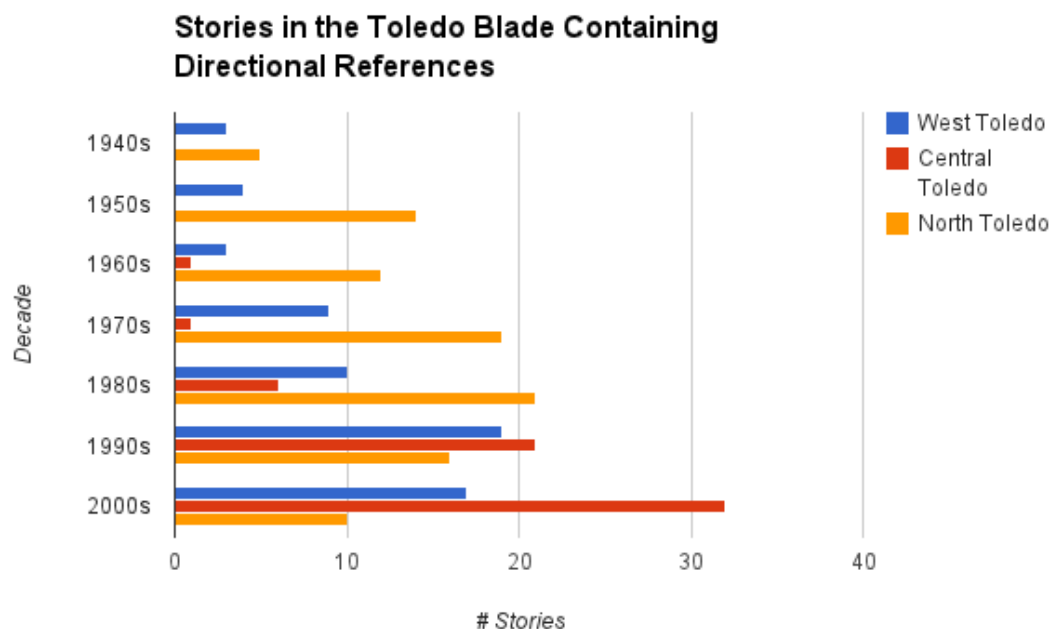
Figure 6. Stories in the Toledo *Blade* Containing Directional References

Stories in the Toledo Blade Referring to Specific Neighborhoods
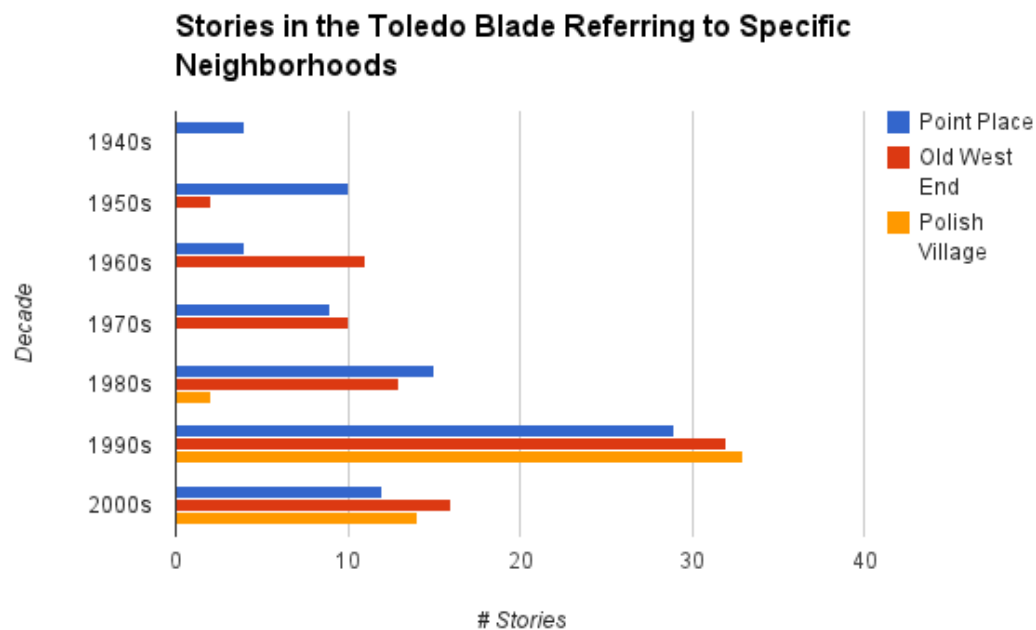
Figure 7. Stories in the Toledo *Blade* Referring to Specific Neighborhoods

This timeline showing a substantial increase in the use of these directional terms is consistent with the overall demographic history of the city. Unlike many of its neighboring midwestern cities, Toledo had a relatively small black population until the end of World War Two. The black population only reached ten percent of the total city population in the 1950s and even as late as 1970 amounted to only 13.8 percent of the population. But through the 1970s and into the 1990s a steady growth of the black population was accompanied by the rapid flight of whites from the city to surrounding suburbs. By 1990 the black population neared 20 percent of Toledo's population and by 2000 amounted to nearly one-in-four city residents (See Table 4).

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Journalistically, the most rapid growth in the proportion of black citizens of Toledo occurred precisely at the moment when, due to the Civil Rights Movement, many newspaper editors consciously worked to scrub gratuitous racial references from their pages. However, the public's demand for news conveyed in a manner that matched their racial conceptions did not similarly lessen. Between the pressures to report news that conformed to popular psychological maps of the community and the restraint of newly colorblind journalistic standards a dilemma was created that racial proxies were able to resolve. Over the last quarter of the century a new journalistic habit of using directional euphemisms became ubiquitous.

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	Black Population	% Black Population	% White Population
2010	78073	27.18	64.83
2000	73852	23.55	70.23
1990	65598	19.7	77
1980	61750	17.4	80.1
1970	52915	13.8	85.7
1960	40015	12.6	87.3
1950	25026	8.2	91.7
1940	14597	5.2	94.8
1930	13260	4.6	95.4
1920	5691	2.3	97.6
1910	1877	1.1	98.9

Table 4. Toledo Population (White and Black), 1910-2010 [18]

Conclusion

This survey of articles in the Toledo *Blade* strongly indicates that the newspaper routinely employs terms such as "North Toledo" or "Central Toledo" to signal to readers that the subject of a story is African American, and the term "West Toledo," to signal that the subject is White. Evidence of this purposeful signaling is that none of these terms are employed in a consistent directional context (as evidenced visually on a map) and that the locations of references to "North Toledo" and "Central Toledo" are associated with an overrepresentation of African American subjects compared both with their total share of the metropolitan population and their share of even those census tracts with the most concentrated minority population in the city. Moreover, of the scores of proper names for city neighborhoods, only those that are used to signal whiteness in a majority nonwhite community, such as "Old West End," "Downtown," and "Polish Village," are regularly employed in the newspaper.

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In the Twenty-First century the use of explicit racial language has declined under the pressure of a reigning ethos of color-blindness. In place of sustaining racist stereotypes of black criminality and shiftlessness by directly referring to the race of individuals or communities being reported about, code words that appear on their face to be race neutral have gained currency instead. Scholars such as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva have shown that the use of such coded language effectively transmits racial meaning while maintaining the appearance of color-blindness [Bonilla-Silva 2010] I [Campbell 1995] [Entman 2006]. Teun A. van Dijk reminds media scholars that news is not just a matter of what is printed on the page or projected on the screen, but is an entire system of discourse involving both the conventions of journalism and the social knowledge and the historically constructed frameworks through which readers decode the news text. Racial marking through geographic proxies only functions because news consumers supply their own racial assumptions about their community and successfully decode these cues through a racist frame. Thus, even without explicitly using race as a descriptor, news stories can effectively convey that race is a salient element to the story, or even the central aspect of the story itself [van Dijk 2000].

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Geographic marking is not the only form of racial proxy in common use today. Nellie Tran and Susan Paterson have documented how whites denied their racial privilege and maintained their performance of color-blindness by employing the word "American" as a proxy for "white." By switching American for white such individuals allowed themselves to think in terms of racial norms and desired racial privileges while denying racism as a force in society [Tran et al 2015].

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Martin Conboy's observation of how the news socially functions to define community by reinforcing the feelings of belonging of some and symmetrically categorizing others as outside this core, which he calls "narratives of exclusion" while originally applied to distinctions of national versus foreign, also applies to how news reporting marks its subjects racially through the mechanism of proxy terms. "One important way of identifying outsiders is not in the direct reporting

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of the facts of the case but in the metaphorical cluster of words used to generate an implicit picture of the groups described." [Conboy 2007].[19] In this way the use of racial proxies works to establish an imagined racial community that reinforces the racial frames that themselves are central to this system.

Many studies have documented the powerful role media racial stereotyping plays in reinforcing negative racial perceptions among whites [Arendt 2013] [Dixon 2006] [Domke et al 1999] [Gilliam et al 1996] [Oliver 1999] [Oliver et al 2002] [Romer et al 1998] [Dixon et al 2005]. While researchers have documented how such words as "welfare," "felon," and "food stamps" have been racially coded, no research has yet been done to discover if even less politically-charged language, such as directional references, have also assumed such a role [Gilens 1996] [Domke et al 1999] [Gilliam et al 1996] [Entman et al 2000].

It is beyond the scope of this study to judge the impact of these journalistic practices upon the culture and consciousness of the readers of this newspaper. However, it should be feasible for future researchers using a survey or focus group methodology to delineate the borders and boundaries of Toledoans' mental geography of race and crime. Likely these lines would align closely to those commonly designated by the directional proxy terms regularly employed in the Toledo *Blade*, which would seem to both reflect and reinforce the predominate prejudices of the majority white community.

It is not this author's contention that these practices are conscious ones or matters of formal policy. It is more likely that the newspaper's practices mirror the prevailing implicit biases common at the time and place in which they operate. Any particular news outlets' continued relevance to its readership depends upon its stories being written in such a way that the values and meanings most important to these readers is conveyed. In spite of the widespread belief that America today is a colorblind society and in spite of a public culture praising diversity and tolerance, Americans continue to view their communities through racialized lenses. As long as the underlying demand for news that is parsed according to race continues, the use of various euphemisms and proxies for race will also continue.

It is unlikely that the Toledo *Blade* engages in this practice uniquely or even to any greater extent than any other metropolitan news outlet. As stated earlier some cities have more well defined and specific neighborhood names that serve the same function as directional references in the Toledo *Blade*. While the journalistic conventions of any particular community will vary for reasons of history and locale, the imperative to racially mark stories for a white readership that implicitly associates crime with nonwhite populations probably is not restricted to Northwest Ohio.

Notes

[1] "Toledo's Neighborhoods District Map," in *City of Toledo Consolidated Plan, FY 2010-2015*, p.2.

[2] The intersection where James was killed is part of census tract 5702 that is 82% white and 9% black. Ms. James' home is in census tract 8 that is 10% white and 83% black. (*Census Map for Toledo*, http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/map).

[3] Such reporting was common in the early 1960s. See for example, "8 Boys Cited In Defacing of Negro Home," Toledo *Blade*, July 21, 1961, p. 3 or "Contractors, City Blame Each Other For Loss of Negro Housing Project," June 29, 1945, p. 17.

[4] See also *Associated Press Stylebook*, (New York: Basic Books, 2015), p. x.

[5] *City of Toledo Consolidated Plan, 2010-2015* (Toledo, Ohio, 2010).

[6] The Central Passenger Railroad, a trolley, ran up Erie and Summit streets to the "North Toledo terminus." Polk's Toledo City Directory (R.L. Polk & Co, 1889) p. 100; Poor's Manual, 1907, p. 1271; *Rand, McNally & Co's New Business Atlas Map of Toledo*. Rand, McNally & Co. (Chicago, 1897) David Rumsey Collection.

[7] Toledo, Ohio, Automobile Blue Book, 1917, Vol. 8, Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

[8] Figures based on searches of Proquest Newsstand database for the Toledo *Blade*, Nov. 18, 2005-Nov. 10, 2014.

[9] Research assistance provided by Keyonte' Ashford, Robert Baker, Kelsey Bates, Robert Beck Jr, Ryan Bellissimo, Janella Blanchard, Domonic Bodnar, Anna Collignon, Bridget Coyne, Logan Elias, Marko Filipovic, Skyler Fleshman, Nicholas Gentile, Trenton Greene, Kennesha

Gregory, Jason Grissom, Alexander Hall, Austin Kepling, Jonathan Kovacs, Jeremy Labant, Austin Lesak, Cody Malone, Claire Molitors, Andrew Rellick, Kimber Riley, Zane Ross, Brianna Roys, Timothy Shimrock, Amy Steigerwald, Mckinzey Thompson, Kyle Vandevort, Jordan Weidner, Zaren Wienclaw. Many thanks to Dalton Jones for offering early comments on this article.

[10] Geographic locations derived from 981 stories in the Toledo *Blade* between Nov. 2005 and Nov. 10, 2014 searched by directional terms, "North," "West," "Central," "South," "East," "Downtown," "Point Place," "Old West End," "Polish Village," along with "Toledo" or "City." Data mapping done with Google MyMaps with map data provided by Google 2015.

[11] Geographic locations derived from 981 stories in the Toledo *Blade* between Nov. 2005 and Nov. 10, 2014 searched by directional terms, "North," "West," "Central," "South," "East," "Downtown," "Point Place," "Old West End," "Polish Village," along with "Toledo" or "City." Data mapping done with Google MyMaps with map data provided by Google 2015.

[12] As early as 1940, the *Blade* distinguished between North Toledo and Point Place: "Picnic Planned for Children," July 3, 1940, p. 4; "Detwiler Row Stymies Plans…" May 25, 1952, p. 8.

[13] (Toledo *Blade,* Oct. 15, 2007, B1.)

[14] On boundaries of Ward 2 in the "central city" see Toledo *Blade*, Nov 7, 2013.

[15] Directional References plus "X-side" and "X-end"; crime stories defined as stories including key terms in shooting, robbery, stabbing, rape, murder, beating, arson, in various tenses. ProQuest Newsstand database accessed 11/25/14. Crime rate figures compiled from ESRI "Crime Rate Comparison Map," accessed Nov. 13, 2015. Crime rates are an index based on 100 equal to national average for all metropolitan areas. Methodology and sources are listed as: "The crime data is provided by Applied Geographic Solutions, Inc. (AGS). AGS created models using the FBI Uniform Crime Report databases as the primary data source and using an initial range of about 65 socio-economic characteristics taken from the 2000 Census and AGS' current year estimates...The total crime index incorporates all crimes and provides a useful measure of the relative "overall" crime rate in an area." (http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=8125e8f4244a47d986f4cd840824eef3)

[16] Directional References plus "X-side" and "X-end." ProQuest Newsstand database accessed 11/25/14.

[17] Google newspaper archives are found at site:google.com/newspapers (accessed Nov. 21-Nov.25, 2014). Google's archive is comprehensive going back to 1940, but because Google's search engine relies on OCR scans of microfilmed editions of the newspaper, only a small subset of stories are captured by any individual query. While there may be search bias against older newspapers as their microfilmed condition was in many cases worse than more recent years, this bias does not seem to extend past the 1950s. To check for this bias a search was done on a term whose usage is presumably ubiquitous in local news through all decades. The term "mayor" was selected and it appeared in equal frequency in the decades of the 1960s and the 1990s. Likewise, as can be seen in Figure 1 above, nearly as many references to "North Toledo" appeared in the 1950s as in the 1990s. Note, figures for the decade of the 2000s are systematically reduced as Google's archive extends only to 2007.

[18] "Table 36. Ohio - Race and Hispanic Origin for Selected Large Cities and Other Places: Earliest Census to 1990," Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States* (Working Paper No. 76, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2005)

[19] See also, [Conboy 2010].

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