

The Million Dollar Blocks analytic framework shifts the conversation about crime from one about where crimes occur to one about where public dollars are being spent on incarceration? What are the implications of shifting towards a conversation focused on the public impact and cost of incarceration versus one focused on where offenses occur? In general, neighborhood crime data can be tricky to accurately represent - why might this be the case? What questions do we need to ask about crime reporting in order to effectively analyze and facilitate deliberation using data on where crimes occur?

I found the class discussion this week very intriguing because it brought up a topic that challenged my current frame of thinking. The specific case that was brought up in class was the sexual predator map that is open to the public in almost every state I believe. In my life I've always found this map useful because oftentimes there are sexual predators living near you that you wouldn't have known about otherwise. However when I really thought about it I realized that the sexual abuse in my life and the lives of those around me wasn't stopped by the sexual predator map.

When I was in 4th grade my family moved to Utah for 2 years and I remember my dad openly talking about how shocked he was that there were so many sexual predators in Utah. The density is truly astounding. Thus began my early hatred of suburbs and the distance they put between neighbors and communities. Distance breeds secrecy in my opinion. Of course this is a very singular opinion and focused on one key issue but my feelings often run hot. I became acutely aware at a young age that suburbs were breeding grounds for secrecy and putting on a show for the rest of the world. This was only exacerbated by the culture of the Mormon religion in Utah. The shame, secrecy, and blame surrounding sex is also a breeding ground for sexual deviants.

The point of all of this is, my family was aware of the sexual predator map and we watched it closely. Nevertheless one of our neighbors who was in charge of the local scout group raped and/or molested a dozen of the boys in our neighborhood. The sexual predator map made us aware of a shut-in predator on our street but not this active sexual predator with no prior offenses (that we knew of).

When I moved back to Utah for college, I again was aware of the sexual predator map, but again it didn't stop it from happening in my neighborhood again. An older man in the neighborhood would let the neighborhood kids use his backyard as a shortcut to the school and of course it came out that he molested countless kids.

Again, when I was in my undergraduate program I was aware of this map and that didn't stop my professor from harassing and assaulting more than a dozen girls in my program,

something he had done at his prior university with nothing published or charged against him.

My point is, my whole life I've held this map as something necessary because sexual crimes are so evil and have deeply harmed me and countless loved ones. In class I was first appalled to hear people say that the map was wrong. But I think I came to understand that they weren't saying punishing the crime is wrong, they were saying that the current reporting system is harmful to those on the map and almost never useful to those using the map.

Looking back in my own life I started to recognize that yes, that map actually wasn't really useful. I also did some research after class and the data surrounding the sexual predator maps around the country is very intriguing, in my opinion it points to the uselessness of the mapping.

All this writing was leading to my main point: While I am still uneasy about my feelings on this subject, my eyes have been opened to the fact that there are probably better ways to report crimes than mapping the offenders. I am not 100% sure what these better ways are but I know they exist.