# Mapping Consequential Geographies in the Carceral State: Education Journey Mapping as a Qualitative Method With Girls of Color With Dis/abilities

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## Abstract
This article provides an innovative critical qualitative method framed in Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) that mapped the experiences of those at the margins through a sociospatial dialectic. I first applied a sociospatial dialectic to the school–prison nexus. Next, I introduced Education Journey Mapping, a critical qualitative method that centered students of color with dis/abilities in the research process, as one way to rupture notions of normalcy in research. Finally, I analyzed a set of Education Journey Maps that incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities created to highlight the multidimensional value of these counter-cartographies in understanding consequential geographies.

**Special Issue: Reclaiming Disability in Critical Qualitative Research**
Guest Editors: Jessica Nina Lester and Emily Nusbaum

On January 11, 2016, Gynnya McMillen, a 16-year-old Black girl, died at Lincoln Village Regional Juvenile Detention Center in Elizabethtown, Kentucky (Taylor, 2016). Though her death has been attributed to an irregular heartbeat, there remain many questions about the use of force she experienced at the facility (Kates, 2016). What is known is that 10 min after arriving at the detention center, Gynnya refused to remove her sweatshirt and multiple staff responded, placing her in an "Akido hold," restraining her on the ground for more than 4 min (Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, 2016). Several wellness checks for Gynnya were missed throughout the night and morning that were later falsified, and 11 min passed from when she was found nonresponsive and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was started (Wagner & Brennan, 2016). Many are still asking for #JusticeforGynnya.

> Justice . . . has a *consequential geography*, a spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or a set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped . . . these consequential geographies are not just the outcome of social and political processes, they are also a dynamic force affecting these processes. (Soja, 2010, pp. 1-2)

Studying consequential geographies acknowledged that space was not an empty void and considered the ways these geographies affected experiences (Soja, 2010). Contemplating the consequential geographies in Gynnya McMillen's case forced the question, "Why was her Black girl body placed at a maximum-security juvenile incarceration center following an altercation in her home?" After experiencing interpersonal violence, Gynnya found herself not in a safe space, but in a space of state sanctioned violence of which she was immediately the target.

Consequential geographies, the dynamic role that space plays in shaping justice and injustice, require examination because inequities and justice are fueled through the sociospatial dialectic, ways social processes and space influence each other (Soja, 2010). Research centered on remedying systemic inequities has traditionally hyper-focused on the social dimensions and ignored this sociospatial dialectic of consequential geographies. Yet, spatial dimensions of injustice have worked *in tandem* with social processes to (a) uphold normative standards (e.g., perceived white, male,

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abled), (b) pathologize those that do not meet those standards as "less than," and (c) remove and punish those who have been labeled as problematic from the public sphere (Ferri, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ware, 2002). Empirical research has often advocated a hegemonic commitment to the normal, which has traditionally limited the ways in which oppressed people are represented (Brantlinger, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).One way to resist how notions of normalcy were (re)inscribed was to explore consequential geographies of the School-to-Prison Pipeline with young people of color with dis/abilities.[1] Gynnya's story was one infused with injustice; her story was one example of how girls of color with a dis/ability were subjected to violence by the carceral state.

The purpose of this article was to provide an innovative critical qualitative method framed in Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit; Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013) that mapped the experiences of those at the margins, like Gynnya McMillen, through a sociospatial dialectic. To do this, I first applied a sociospatial dialectic to the Pipeline through a DisCrit lens. Next, I introduced Education Journey Mapping, a critical qualitative method that centered students of color with dis/abilities in the research process, as one way to rupture notions of normalcy in research. Finally, I analyzed a set of Education Journey Maps (EJMs) that incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities created to highlight the value of these counter-cartographies in understanding consequential geographies. Using the critical qualitative method of EJMs moved historically oppressed students from margin to center, creating a more expansive understanding of systemic inequities and providing more comprehensive solutions.

## DisCrit and the Sociospatial Dialectic

Informed by both disability studies and critical race theory, DisCrit as a theory acknowledged the endemic and interdependent nature of racism and ableism (C. Bell, 2006; D. Bell, 1976), and provided several affordances. DisCrit illuminated ways bodies and minds determined to be abnormal were identified as problematic, pathologized through labeling, segregated for remediation, and punished for perceived abnormalities (Baynton, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). DisCrit resisted master-narratives, the "common sense" myths that favor the powerful, by juxtaposing them against counter-narratives, chronicles of the historically oppressed (Charlton, 2000; Matsuda, 1987). These counter-narratives provided an opportunity to understand what social and spatial mechanisms worked to dis/able students (Ben-Moshe, Nocella, & Withers, 2013; Broderick & Leonoardo, 2016). Finally, DisCrit afforded an opportunity for considering the sociospatial dialectic, recognizing how racism and ableism banished bodies to quarantined spaces (Selden, 1999; Vélez & Solorzano, 2016). Therefore, through these affordances, DisCrit addressed how

temporally and spatially, unwanted bodies have been most vulnerable to violence from both individuals and systems, and how that violence "affect(ed) students of color with dis/abilities qualitatively differently than White students with dis/abilities" (Annamma, Connor, et al., 2013, p. 7). DisCrit as a conceptual framing required me to bring different theories, questions, and methods to bear on the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). In the next section, I reconsidered the Pipeline's role in the carceral state through the sociospatial dialectic.

## The Consequential Geographies of the School-to-Prison Pipeline in a Carceral State

Hot spots, high-density phenomena found in particular spaces, must be considered to understand consequential geographies (Eck, Chainey, et al., 2005). School-to-Prison Pipeline literature identified common social hot spots, which in the name of security, made schools look and feel more like prisons. These social hot spots included (a) installing devices such as bars on windows, metal detectors, and barbed wire (Advancement Project, 2010); (b) integrating police officers, sometimes armed, and ticketing students for minor offenses (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2011); and (c) implementing suspensions, expulsions, and referral to law enforcement (Fabelo, 2011). The consequential geographies of the Pipeline were deeply racialized; these hot spots were most often present in spaces where Black and Brown bodies were educated (Civil Rights Data Collection [CRDC], 2016).

Though these hot spots were important to identify, the focus on their existence tended to oversimplify the Pipeline. Spatially, there were macro- (global), meso- (regional), and microgeographical (local) scales (Soja, 2010). A spatial analysis rejected the sole focus on the microgeographical view of the Pipeline, as a problematic but isolated phenomenon, and instead situated it multiscalarly within the macrogeographic carceral state. Said differently, instead of an exclusive focus on the social hot spots of the School-to-Prison Pipeline, considering the consequential geographies contextualized ways society was imbued with carceral logics.

The carceral state is committed to maintaining order through surveillance, removal, and punishment (Foucault, 1977); these carceral logics occurred even in spaces far from prison. Examples of carceral logics across institutions included the following: (a) Higher Education limited applicants' chances of being admitted through disclosure of criminal history requirements (Center for Community Alternatives, 2010); (b) Child Protection Services removed children to punish parents, who often lacked resources (Appell, 1996); (c) Immigration focused on border patrol and detention of asylum seekers, including incarcerating mothers and their

children, many of whom have experienced violence in their quest for safety (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012). These carceral logics worked between institutions to surveil citizens, label some bodies as dis/abled, and target those bodies for removal from the public domain. Moreover, through conflating helping with monitoring and fixing, the workers in these institutions became carceral state agents who applied carceral logics to their clients, students, and patients. Multiscalarly situating schools within a carceral state allowed for a more expansive perspective, viewing the social hot spots mentioned above as carceral logics focused on surveillance, removal, and retribution. Acknowledging the consequential geographies of the Pipeline allowed it to be reframed as the school–prison nexus, recognizing that schools were one institution "in a web of punitive threads . . . which capture(d) the historic, systemic, and multifaceted nature of the intersections of education and incarceration" (Meiners, 2007, p. 32). Applying DisCrit and the sociospatial dialectic also required an expanded view of the populations within that school–prison nexus that were vulnerable to being marked, policed, and punished.

## The Carceral State, the School–Prison Nexus, and Intersectional Identities

Carceral logics are applied, not to all bodies, but to particular bodies. People of color have been racially criminalized throughout American history (DuBois, 1899). Spatially, racial criminalization existed in "the interconnections and intersections of white supremacy *within the criminal justice system and seemingly neutral social institutions*" (Rabaka, 2010, p. 308, emphasis added). In other words, the carceral state disciplined Black and Brown bodies through carceral logics between institutions, beyond the criminal justice system. This carceral state is (re)produced through commitments to white supremacy and anti-blackness. That is, society not only favored whiteness, it discarded, reprimanded, and even eradicated blackness. Therefore, the goal was not to surveil *all* bodies, but to socially and spatially surveil Black and Brown bodies.

The goals of the carceral state then were enacted through applying carceral logics to education spaces where Black and Brown bodies were most likely to occupy. Therefore, the school–prison nexus was not a broken education system that inadvertently discriminated against Black and Brown students. Instead, schools served their purpose in the carceral state socially and spatially situated in a system of white supremacy; schools provided *certain* children with chances to solidify or improve their social standing, whereas they removed opportunities for others.

There were other intersectional identities that in tandem with race, made a young person more susceptible to carceral logics in education spaces including gender (Crenshaw, 1989) and dis/ability (Annamma, 2016). Though overall, girls were underrepresented in the school–prison nexus, girls of color were often funneled out of schools via previously identified hot spots including disciplinary removal, referral to law enforcement (CRDC, 2016), arrests, and incarceration (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Special education processes (e.g., identification, placement, pedagogy) remained an understudied school–prison nexus hot spot, as students with dis/abilities were also vastly overrepresented in discipline and incarceration, particularly when intersecting with race (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). About 20% of girls of color with dis/abilities were suspended from schools in the United States in 2013-2014 (CRDC, 2016). Black students with dis/abilities were 4 times more likely than white students to be educated in a juvenile incarceration setting (Osher, Woodruff, & Sims, 2002). Students of color labeled with emotional dis/abilities were particularly susceptible as they were 19% of the population nationally, but comprised 50% of students with dis/abilities incarcerated (Losen, Hodson, Ee, & Martinez, 2015). Students with these intersectional identities (race, gender, and disability) then were extremely susceptible to the hot spots of the school–prison nexus situated within the carceral state.

The literature provided a better understanding of *who* was being funneled out of educational spaces through the school–prison nexus: the carceral state targeted bodies furthest from the desired norm of white, male, and abled. What were lesser investigated were the consequential geographies of the school–prison nexus. This article provided a new methodological contribution through DisCrit and the sociospatial dialectic that centered some of the students most affected by carceral state education, incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities.

## Methodology: Mapping the Margins

In this section, I provided a brief overview of the sites and participants and then provided in-depth information on the conceptualization, data collection, and analysis potential of Education Journey Mapping as a method. The goal was to employ empirical research using EJMs to illustrate what mapping the margins looked like in practice.

### Carceral Institutions and the Girls Within

The EJMs used in this article were part of a larger racially gendered and abled critical phenomenological study.[2] This critical qualitative study took place in a larger Western state in two juvenile incarceration facilities. Both sites were part of the state Juvenile Justice Department (JJD)[3] and all students at both sites were adjudicated, meaning they were sentenced and could not leave until either their mandatory sentence was up or they received probation/parole. Though the sites were very different, they were both part of the JJD and therefore part of the punitive arm of the carceral state.

A total of 10 girls participated, the youngest was in eighth grade and the oldest graduated high school during the study (ages 13 to 20).[4] Six identified as African Americans, three as Latinas, and one as Native American. School and security personnel recommended participants if they identified as a person of color and met the study's definition of emotional disability: currently labeled, previously labeled, or could qualify for a label as nominated by staff. This definition was important because it represented the fluidity of dis/ability labels; acknowledging the shifting boundaries of ability and dis/ability, and rejecting dis/ability as something to locate within a student (Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2010).

## Education Journey Mapping

A DisCrit conceptual framing required me to note that,

> DisCrit does not purport to "give voice," as we recognize that people of color and/or those with dis/abilities already have voice. Research that purports to give voices runs the risks of speaking for or in place of people of color with dis/abilities, which can reinforce paternalistic notions . . . instead, it is imperative for researchers to use (counter-narratives) as a form of academic activism to explicitly "talk back" to master-narratives. (Annamma, Connor, et al., 2013, p. 14)

To avoid paternalism in research with girls of color with dis/abilities, I sought humanizing approaches, ones committed to "relationships of care and dignity and dialogical consciousness raising for both researchers and participant . . . involving reciprocity and respect" (Paris & Winn, 2013, p. xvi). This DisCrit framing was used to develop a humanizing method, EJMs, which illuminated consequential geographies.

*Why Education Journey Mapping?.* Temporally, mapping has long been considered a quantitative methodology and more recently has been closely linked with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Yet there existed a long record of mapping as qualitative method (Kwan & Knigge, 2006). Mapping of social spaces has been used in geography (Rambaldi & Callosa-Tarr, 2000) to better understand individual's sense of place in a physical space (Elwood & Leitner, 1998). Through "hidden spatial preferences, cultural meanings, and everyday navigations of the city," these maps linked individuals' sense of belonging to physical spaces (Brennan-Horley & Gibson, 2009, p. 2602). Qualitative mapping expanded from geography to a variety fields and disciplines, and the purposes of mapping spread to include conceptual, social, and cognitive relationships (Lynch, 1960; Milgram & Jodelet, 1976; Powell, 2010).

In qualitative research, maps provided more than "a sense of the physical spaces that we traverse through, maps . . . shed light on the ways in which we traverse, encounter, and construct racial, ethnic, gendered, and political boundaries"

(Powell, 2010, p. 553). Scholars have used mapping as a mediational method, one that connected theories and the stories people told about themselves across time and space, in multiple empirical research projects in education settings (Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine, & Sirin, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Maps interrogated the space between individuals and social structures and linked the micro-embodied experiences with macrosociopolitical inequities (Futch & Fine, 2012). As the color line represented the ways physical and legal segregation affected ways African Americans felt about themselves, maps allowed for an exploration between external environments and internal spaces (DuBois, 1903). Maps also provided an opportunity for historically oppressed students to share "counter-cartographies," ones that challenged dominant representations of the world (Vélez et al., 2016). Finally, maps permitted for both spatial and temporal representations of selves without reifying developmental stages (Futch & Fine, 2014).

*Education Journey Mapping as data collection.* With the benefits of mapping in mind, I adapted identity-mapping techniques[5] (Sirin & Fine, 2008) to create EJMs. EJMs were conceptualized to humanize research through centering the interactions, voice, and knowledge of students of color with dis/abilities (Paris, 2011). Therefore, collecting these counter-cartographies was not as simple as doing a drawing activity that could be added without thought or care, instead EJMs were a purposeful and rigorous method with concrete elements including (a) generating a constructive prompt, (b) creating continual access, (c) providing genuine reciprocation, (d) articulating complex positionality, and (e) expressing authentic gratitude.

*Generating a constructive prompt.* I wrote the EJM prompt to allow for shifts of time and space and to capture trajectories, as opposed to a moment in time:

> Map your education journey from when you started school to now. Include people, places, obstacles, and opportunities on the way. Draw your relationship with school. You can include what works for you and/or what doesn't. You can use different colors to show different feelings, use symbols like lines and arrows or words. These are just suggestions. Be as creative as you like and, if you don't want to draw you can make more of a flowchart. Afterward, you will get a chance to explain it to me.

Though EJMs were named as a type of map, capturing spatial relationships did not need to be in traditional map form. To be productive, the prompt was purposefully broad so as not to be prescriptive. The EJMs girls produced (below) illustrated that students did not feel restricted or required to create traditional maps.

*Creating continual access.* One goal for this data collection method was to access the girls' education journeys without relying solely on the verbal and written comprehension or

expression of the girls. Therefore, I gave them a printed copy of the prompt while I read it out loud from an iPad. This prompt stayed up on the screen for the girls to refer back to whenever they wanted and I read it to them as many times as they requested after the initial reading. Materials were simple drawing materials that could be found in most education spaces (e.g., white paper, colored pencils, markers).[6] The EJMs gave the girls an alternative to conveying their stories textually.

*Providing genuine reciprocation.* Each time a student created and shared an EJM, I created and shared my own for multiple reasons. My own map construction (a) limited my gaze on their map creation process; in incarceration where girls actions and work were constantly surveilled, I sought to reassure them that I was not there to monitor or punish them; (b) communicated to students that I also had a narrative, one to be discussed not simply interpreted without my input; participants were allowed to ask questions about my EJM, just as I did with theirs; and (c) provided an opportunity for ingenuous interchange; I was able to share my education trajectory and positionality with the girls, to be as transparent with them as I asked them to be with me. I was open about the interpersonal and state trauma that had affected my own education journey. My nontraditional education trajectory often positioned me closer to them than to many in the academy. Many students specifically thanked me for that transparency and mentioned in later interviews that it helped them be open with me.

*Articulating complex positionality.* It was important for me to explicitly discuss both the commonalities and differences between our identities and stories. As a woman of color, all of the girls and I had experienced similar social processes of being raced and gendered as "less than." However, I also wanted to be candid about the power imbalances between the girls and myself. I was marked with identities of middle class, cisgender, perceived as able, with much formal education, all of which afforded me access to many spaces the girls could not enter. Moreover, as a person who was not incarcerated, I was able to move freely outside the incarceration that defined their current status. The maps did not eliminate the power imbalances between us, as no method could and so were not meant to, but they allowed for the girls and myself to explicitly discuss those inequities, where our lives overlapped and deviated.

*Expressing authentic gratitude.* In a carceral state, the education trajectories of girls of color with dis/abilities were often filled with interpersonal and state violence. By asking the girls to share their trajectories, I was asking them to recount some very visceral trauma (Dutro, 2011). This is not to say that the counter-stories girls told were wholly negative, many discussed resistance and joy in their narratives as well (Annamma, 2016). However, state violence

was ever present so I worked to build trust and consistently show authentic gratitude. In the creation of EJMs, gratitude was beyond saying thank you. It was in the listening and speaking, which created a dialogic spiral,

> (W)hereby the dialogic process of listening and speaking co-creates an area of trust between speakers-and the space between. In this between space, the speakers' discourse reveals vulnerabilities and feelings . . . when we speak, we hope those we are speaking to-our audience-will listen and reciprocate our words by answering them genuinely. (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014, p. 30)

EJMs allowed for the expression of gratitude and building of trust with girls of color with dis/abilities in the ways I shared and listened in both data collection and analysis.

It is important to note that the humanizing approaches that underlie EJMs meant that these maps could not stand in isolation to be interpreted by the researcher, that is, they were not there to be analyzed without student voice, but should have been part of a larger corpus of data.[7] This requirement allowed students to author their own experiences as knowledge generators. As others take up the EJM method, they should adapt as needed for their own purposes, however, all five of these concrete elements should be included to humanize their research approach and garner counter-cartographies. EJMs as a qualitative method reflected my critical commitment to exploring the individual spatial and temporal journeys of students of color with dis/abilities while situating them in the macrosociopolitical reality of inequities reproduced in a carceral state education.

*The cartographer's clinic.* To further situate incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities as knowledge generators, capable of creating solutions to the inequities they faced, I included them in the data collection and spatial analysis in the "The Cartographer's Clinic" wherein they were positioned as emerging expert cartographers. We began by discussing what the field of cartography was, how maps were created, and what themes and outliers were in relation to mapmaking and research. Using a handout that included the following prompts and questions and an optional place to take notes, the students then did a silent gallery walk of all the maps.

> Start with a silent walk through. Note what you see throughout the Education Journey Maps. Just write them down or make a mental note quietly for now.

> Themes between maps: What are the similarities you see? What do you love? What questions do you have? What does it make you think about your own life? What would you like to be in the map in five years/next year? What part of these maps would benefit younger girls?

Outliers: Ask yourself, what stands out? What is different? Remember to be an outlier takes courage to say something. It may be something we are all thinking but many of us were too scared to say.

Next, we co-constructed the ground rules for discussing the maps, which were as follows: (a) No one was required to share but we could all learn from each other's stories; (b) We could inquire but not interrupt; (c) If there were converging or contrasting experiences, we would discuss them in the language of themes and outliers.

Then, while participants listened, asked questions, and took notes, students voluntarily shared individual maps. All participants volunteered, as many of the girls of color with dis/abilities declared they were rarely asked about their experiences in the world. These moments too served as data collection because girls were getting a chance to retell their stories with additional details and information. It also served as a process of in-depth member checking, permitting them to critique their own accounts as well as my own interpretations (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). They were able to clarify and therefore co-construct meaning of my initial findings. It was data analysis because often, stories one girl told inspired others to share themes and outliers related to their own trajectories and they coded these categories within their own and each other's counter-narratives. The girls used the language of cartography and research to analyze their maps in relationship to others, situating themselves in larger narratives around the school–prison nexus, the carceral state, and systemic inequities. The girls' data analysis provided insight into themes and outliers that I would not have found on my own[8] and highlighted the necessity of girls of color with dis/abilities to be central actors in the research process. The contribution of the method of Education Journey Mapping framed in DisCrit provided a new way to explore the consequential geographies of incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities. Ultimately, the processes of creating and analyzing the EJMs and the Cartographer's Clinic allowed for a sense of the larger inequities students face, ones that were both embodied and resisted.

## The Multidimensional Nature of Education Journey Mapping

EJMs were an innovative, critical, qualitative method that provided sociospatial perspectives that neither interviews nor observations could have uncovered on their own. The counter-cartographies shared by incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities revealed EJMs to be more than geographic representations of their lives, but were multidimensional counter-narratives. Below I use the girls' EJMs to explore these topographical, physical, and political dimensions.
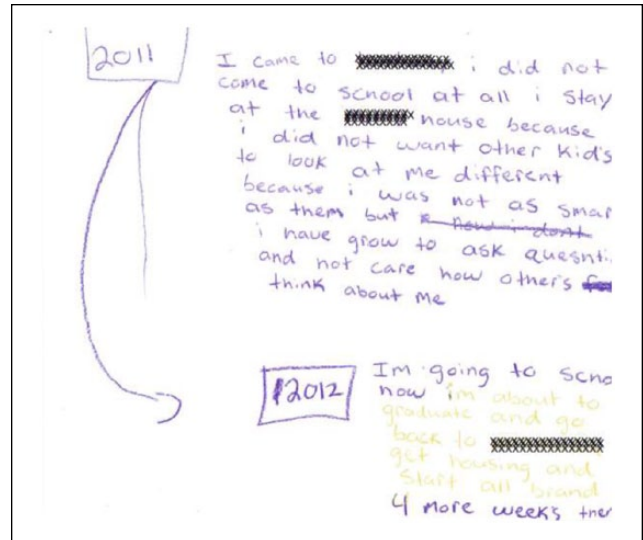


**Figure 1.** Erykah's Education Journey Map.
*Note.* All Black x's on Education Journey Maps are to maintain confidentiality.

### Topographical Dimensions

Girls were able to illustrate relief, including elevations and depressions, as an important component of the topographical dimensions of maps. Relief was both texture and contour, demonstrating participants' high and low points and their relationships with education. Erykah's counter-cartography (Figure 1) told a story of elevations and depressions as she prepared to leave incarceration:

[9]SAA: So what has been, you've been in MLK for a long time and are about to leave, what has being here taught you—both good and bad?

Erykah: Ok, bad is to sneak around, bad is that they don't let you. There's a lot of bad actually. Bad is that, they don't like let you like go out and make your own doctor's appointments. I am about to leave and I never, I have not even.

SAA: Made your own doctor's appointments?

Erykah: Or even went out on my own with daughter or anything.

SAA: So what about the good . . .?

Erykah: (points to her map) I've been waiting for this you know, so I want to graduate, not just to prove to her I can do it but to my daughter and to everybody else.

In her EJM, Erykah shared how the consequential geographies of injustice were maintained through hyper-surveillance in incarceration settings, which dis/abled her through limiting her opportunities to practice the most basic of skills, such as setting up appointments or going on outings with her daughter. Yet this depression did not limit her
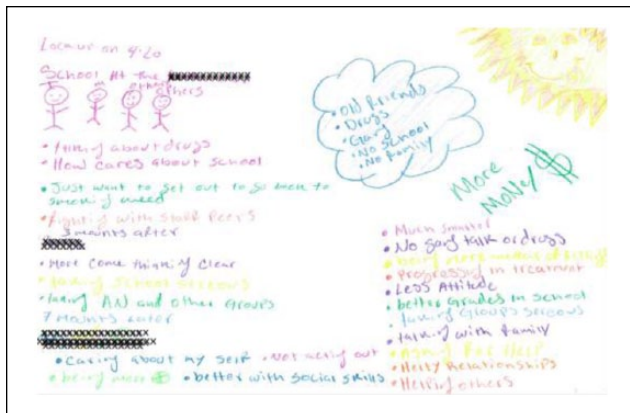
**Figure 2.** Veronica's Education Journey Map.



**Figure 3.** Imani's Education Journey Map.

determination to graduate for her daughter—and she was able to capture the importance of this elevation as well. Erykah's counter-narrative defied the majoritarian story of her as a criminal who did not care about education and instead highlighted her role as a conscientious mother and determined high school student.

Moreover, this topography was a tool for girls to reject a fixed picture of themselves. The topographical dimension of EJMs allowed for the girls to present themselves as multilayered selves in motion throughout their education trajectory (Futch & Fine, 2012). Veronica's EJM animated her self and trajectory (Figure 2).

> Veronica: (I)t's just because I run from my problems and I don't have to handle things until I feel like it. It feels like a little block, like a glass in front of me that I can cross whenever I want . . .
> SAA: So what do you think the difference is? Is it because you got locked up so you had to go to school? What made you like it?
> Veronica: No, I feel like I made a choice for something good. Like it comes to a point where you have to realize what's really going to help you. And are you going to hurt your family or not? Or are you going to hurt yourself? And I feel like going to school, I'll hurt no one.

Through her EJM, Veronica resisted my positioning of being locked up as the reason she liked school now, which was important because she did not attribute her "improvements" to anything the carceral state did for her. Methodologically, EJMs mediated Veronica's experience and she was able to ignore pressures to give a socially acceptable answer, a common concern in qualitative methods. Yet Veronica also did not present herself as a static being, limited to one representation. By narrating both running away from her problems and making conscious choices in incarceration, Veronica demonstrated her multilayered self in motion.

Finally, many students did not believe that learning stopped when they exited the doors of the school. Through EJMs, the girls were able to represent their own historical memory wherein family and community members taught valuable cultural wealth to students (Yosso, 2005). Imani's counter-cartography (Figure 3) captured this in the Cartographer's Clinic,

> Imani: (I)f my mom wasn't caring about my education, I wouldn't have been put through school. I wouldn't know my ABCDs and 123s. I wouldn't know what poetry is. I wouldn't know what writing, I wouldn't know what a sentence is . . . I wouldn't know what the bass is, the choruses of music, the lines when you write 'em.
> Nashawna: Um, what is that? (points to red component of Imani's EJM)
> Imani: This red part, it represents life because, it's like um, a lifeline. From generations, like there was sweat and blood that our parents, my parents had to sweat and bleed to give birth to me. Or to make sure that I'm safe and have clothes on my back, a roof over my head and food in my tummy. And then like I end up getting pregnant and having my daughter so it just continues down the line . . .

Imani included loved ones that she had and had not actually met but were part of a shared family and community history. This allowed her space to claim her ancestral knowledge as part of her education. Through the method of EJMs, students of color with dis/abilities expressed texture and contour, resisted being portrayed in static ways, and situated themselves in contexts of not only formal education that was often oppressive, but also a lineage of learning in informal contexts that was a form of resistance.

### Physical Dimensions

Girls represented physical dimensions of their education trajectories through a sense of embodiment in physical spaces; students illustrated how they experienced injustice
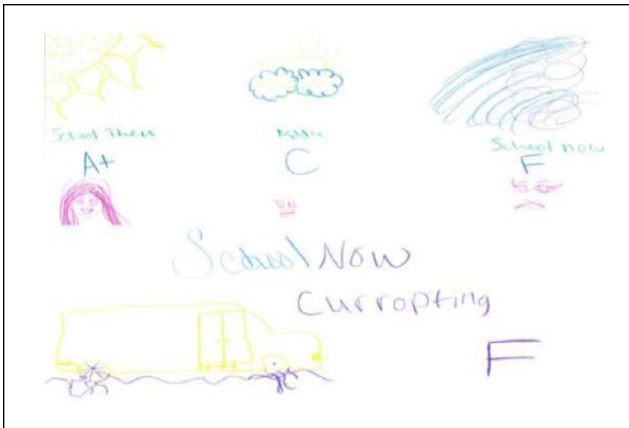
**Figure 4.** Tristen's Education Journey Map.



**Figure 5.** Sapphire's Education Journey Map.

in education contexts, how that injustice was felt in their bodies, and the spaces in between selves and others (Futch & Fine, 2014). Tristen's used her EJM (Figure 4) to describe this in the Cartographer's Clinic.

> Tristen: I loved school when I was little.
> SAA: Can I ask a question—
> Tristen: (nods)
> SAA: Who else liked school when they were little?
> Nashawna: That's the only thing I could escape to.
> Tristen: Yeah, that's where I could get away from stuff . . . And then I started going to middle school and it dropped down to a C 'cuz I was having trouble remembering stuff. I don't know, I'm just bad at school . . .
> SAA: Y'all are hard on yourselves. In interviews, I'm surprised and sad at how often you insult yourselves.
> Tristen: Well, yeah, I think I am stupid. I've been told I'm stupid too by a principal.
> Myosha: You're really smart, Tristen.
> SAA: That is not ok. Don't ever believe that.
> Veronica: She is really smart . . .

Tristen's counter-cartography elucidated how the carceral state affected her internal feelings about school, which she used to love but eventually started to hate. She felt like a failure and this was increased when a principal told her she was stupid.

Girls of color with dis/abilities were often the target of teachers' and school staff ire. In March, Shaniaya Hunter, a Georgia Black girl with a dis/ability, uploaded a video of her being berated by a teacher who said,

> You're the dumbest girl I have ever met in my life, and I have been around for 37 years and clearly, you are the dumbest girl that I have ever met . . . You know what your purpose going to be? To have sex and have children, because you ain't gonna never be smart. (Gupta, 2016)

Temporally, this teacher's attack on Hunter linked to a long history of using race as a proxy for lack of intelligence, and

particularly targeting girls of color as good for nothing but reproduction (Menchaca, 1997). Spatially, students of color in special education were more likely to be segregated where they may be subjected to low expectations and problematic pedagogy (Fierros & Conroy, 2002; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Reid & Knight, 2006). Using EJMs, girls of color with dis/abilities, including Tristen, were able to represent how education spaces in a carceral state were saturated with racism and ableism, and how these consequential geographies of injustice affected the ways they felt about school. Girls were also able to illuminate how this carceral state education affected the spaces in between internal and external. Sapphire's EJM (Figure 5) illustrated her personal struggles but also her recognition of and deep loathing for the school–prison nexus,

> SAA: Were there any adults in your life you felt close to?
> Sapphire: My grandma but she died in 2005 of breast cancer. I think after that I was just like fuck it.
> SAA: When things started going downhill, did anyone try to help? Were there teachers or anyone who asked what was going on with you?
> Sapphire: No. 'Cuz that's none of y'alls business. I would be like what the fuck you mean? Stay out of my business because teachers, they're cop callers. But then when you need cops, they're nowhere to be found.

Sapphire's counter-cartography captured that space between the internal and external in drawing herself walking away from the space of school. Though she attributed that to several things, it is important to note that no teacher or school staff reached out to her when Sapphire, was experiencing personal loss. She also called out teachers as agents of the carceral state. Here, Sapphire illustrated how the carceral state boundary between schools and police was porous, meaning the link between education and incarceration was clear to her (Annamma, 2016).

Finally, Myosha used her EJM (Figure 6) as a discursive tool to tell the story of being punished by her teacher specifically for being politically active and how her family helped her stay strong,
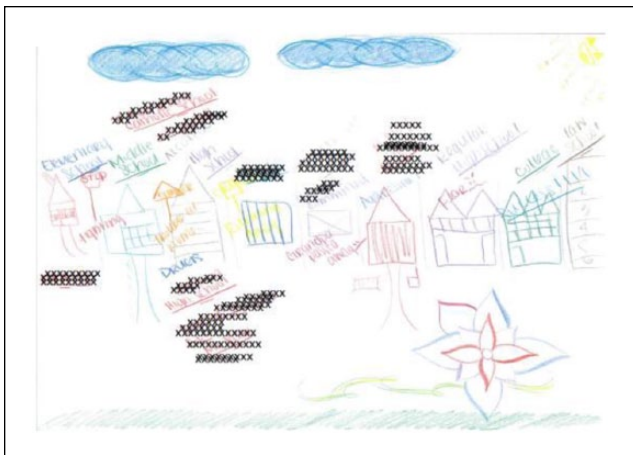
**Figure 6.** Myosha's Education Journey Map.



**Figure 7.** Ashley's Education Journey Map.

SAA: . . . Did you learn anything about . . . Native Americans in school?

Myosha: No, I already know. Because my grandma and my mom educate my on those types of things . . . the only time I would like fight school was when we had to learn about Christopher Columbus. Like we had a protest because he doesn't deserve a holiday. One day I wore that said no more Columbus day and my teacher after that gave me bad grades and stuff. Yeah, just because I wore a shirt. Like she called me to her desk and pulled it down and told me well you can't wear that to school. And I said, well you're not the principal so you can't tell me what I can and can't do 'cuz I stand up for what I believe is right . . .

SAA: Did that lessen your interest in school?

Myosha: Yeah, I started not caring about school . . . I feel like I was being punished for something that wasn't even my fault.

Myosha experienced a consequential geography of injustice by being surveilled during, removed from, and punished through carceral state education based on her political beliefs rooted in her indigeneity. This affected her deeply, as she retold that story in nearly every interview and linked it to why she quit caring about school. The physical dimensions of EJMs allowed girls to make visible power dynamics and state violence, ways those consequential geographies affected their external, internal, and in-between spaces, along with institutional and individual factors that protected against those forces.

### Political Dimensions

Boundary lines (e.g., city, state, nation) were traditionally thought of as political dimensions of maps. Yet girls provided expansive notions of boundaries through their EJMs. Girls were able to represent the boundaried, which dis/abled
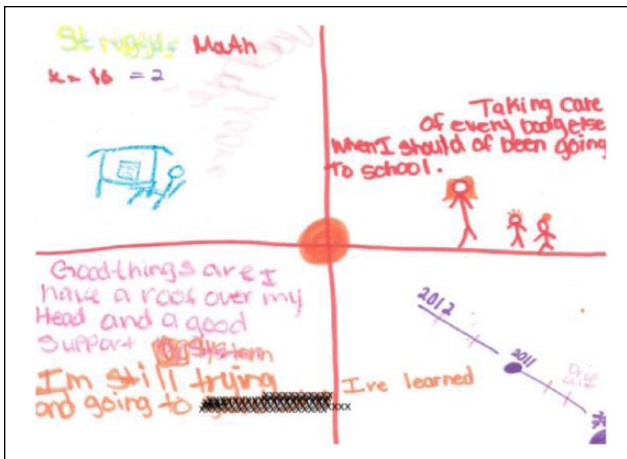
them by constructing and maintaining limited access to opportunities in a carceral state. Ashley identified a dis/abling barrier in her counter-cartography (Figure 7).

Ashley: And then my struggle in life is this math and it's really making me mad 'cuz it's so hard. To me and I don't get it. And then, that's my struggle in school now. 'Cuz I want to move to this (points to EJM reference to additional schooling). But I can't move to this if I can't do this (points to EJM reference to math as a struggle).

SAA: So this (points to EJM reference to math as a struggle) is almost like getting in your way right now and limiting what you can do?

Ashley: Yes.

Ashley's probation officer would not let her apply for early release unless she had her General Educational Development (GED). Though there are important reasons for young people with dis/abilities to have a high school diploma or GED, the high stakes test became a barrier for many incarcerated girls with dis/abilities who were not able to leave, but also not able to pass. For Ashley, not passing the math portion of GED prolonged her stay by several months in which time she got in trouble for breaking curfew, which in turn prolonged her incarceration. In this sense, the GED test became a dis/abling boundary in that it restricted her opportunities.

Yet, the girls also used counter-cartographies to identify, tear down, and reimagine boundaries. In other words, EJMs allowed for girls of color with dis/abilities to imagine a re-boundaried cartography to focus on justice for themselves and others. Nashawna (Figure 8) did this in her counter-cartography,

Nashawna: I like you, I kind of like math. I love to read, I like school. And what I like about school is that you can get an education.
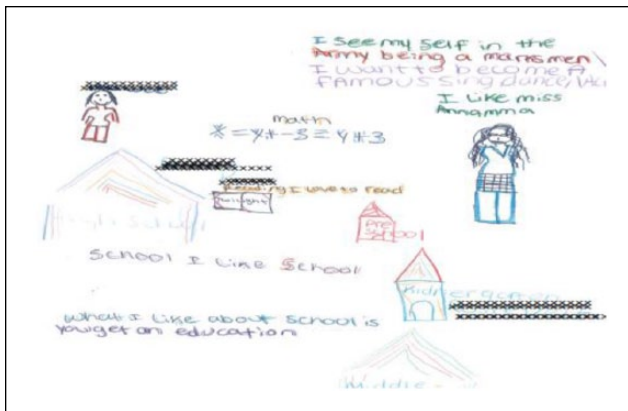
**Figure 8.** Nashawna's Education Journey Map.



**Figure 9.** Justine's Education Journey Map.

In this short description of her EJM, Nashawna re-boundaried her own present. I was visiting her in her living quarters because she had lost privileges of going to school due to breaking rules. Nashawna's experience was not unique. The CRDC (2016) found that 15% of juvenile incarceration facilities offer "less than 20 hours per week (of educational programming) during the school year—which is less than four hours each day in a five-day week" (p. 8). In a carceral institution where even education was a privilege that could be withheld, Nashawna's counter-cartography demonstrated re-boundarying of her present, by having access to her education.

The girls were also able to re-boundary their futures through their counter-cartographies. Both Justine (Figure 9) and Riveara focused on the future in their EJMs.

SAA: So do you know what kind of college—where you want to go to college?
Justine: I want to go to New York.
SAA: New York. What's in NY?
Justine: To start over again.

Justine's dreams were not out of the ordinary for any teenager but were consistently discouraged from teachers, counselors, and other jail personnel. Yet through her EJM, Justine persisted in re-boundarying her life in ways she felt were most productive for her.

Riveara did a different type of re-boundarying in her counter-cartography (Figure 10).

Riveara: And in 2014, I want to work at (a residential treatment center) with special ed.
SAA: With special ed, as a teacher?
Riveara: Like a counselor. Kind of like works that one on one with the students, like helps them with their work one on one.
SAA: Oh, like a paraprofessional?
Riveara: Yeah.

SAA: So tell me why you want to do that? Like where did you get that idea?
Riveara: I got a lot of help like, I got a lot of help when I was going to (center) with this stuff. Not many schools have them or they end up leaving and kids don't get that one-on-one help so I would want to just . . . 'Cuz over there they don't have that much, they have one person for like so many of the kids. So I want to go there because I've seen how they struggle there with that one-on-one help.

Here, Riveara's EJM focused on creating a consequential geography of justice through supporting other students with dis/abilities. She identified some of the dis/abling conditions that occurred in her own carceral state education and sought to intervene. In her EJM, Riveara was able to express empathy for other incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities and imagine a better future for both them and herself. Through EJMs, girls were able to identify the consequential geographies of injustice that dis/abled access to social, political, and economic justice and re-boundary those geographies for justice.

Rooted in a sociospatial dialectic, Education Journey Mapping provided an opportunity to explore the terrain between embodied experiences and social realities (Futch & Fine, 2014). This qualitative method informed by a DisCrit conceptual framing allowed for historically marginalized students to uncover consequential geographies, the physical and social spaces in their education trajectories that transmitted injustice and justice. The consequential geographies the girls identified in their counter-cartographies were multiscalar, meaning they shifted from the micro interactional to the larger macro-sociopolitical within the school–prison nexus. Through their EJMs, incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities were able to be research partners,[10] gathering and analyzing empirical data.
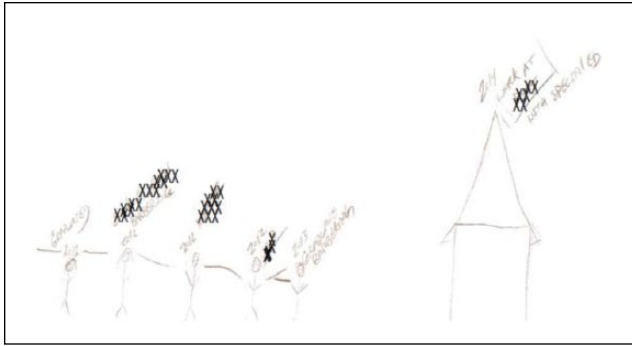
**Figure 10.** Riveara's Education Journey Map.

In creating and analyzing the maps, the students and I were able to deeply mine their counter-cartographies collaboratively. Simultaneously, we unearthed the topographical, physical, and political dimensions of Education Journey Mapping. This method, along with a critical commitment to research *with* participants with dis/abilities, and the girls' willingness to build a dialogic spiral with me, enabled us to do research in ways that positioned girls of color with dis/abilities as knowledge generators.

## Recovery and Detection in Mapping Consequential Geographies

Working with young people of color with dis/abilities required both recovery and detection to understand the consequential geographies they navigated (C. M. Bell, 2011). It was recovery because temporally, familiar figures in history and present day are often not presented as whole selves but as unidimensional. Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, the academic mother of Intersectionality in the academy, recently discussed this recovery work in an interview on carceral state killings of Black women by police, "Disability—emotional, physical and mental—is one of the biggest risk factors for being killed by the police, but it is relatively suppressed in the conversation about police violence" (H. Khaleeli, 2016). At first glance, the connections between extrajudicial killings and the carceral state education the girls described might not be clear. However, Adams and Erevelles (2016) made these connections explicit, calling both dis-locating practices.

> But not all dis-locations are fatal. And not all dis-locating practices are readily recognizable by an outraged public, nor are all perpetrators or victims easily identified in these dis-locations. In fact, some dis-locating practices are so obviously violent, they serve to obscure other normalized everyday practices enacted by seemingly well-intentioned individuals to dis-locate bodies from classrooms, families, and communities into carceral settings such as alternative schools prisons, and institutions. (p. 132)

The incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities in this study were not killed by police, but their lives were still deeply affected by carceral state violence through the school–prison nexus and the agents within (e.g., teachers, social workers, police). Their bodies experienced a series of dis-locations from public schools to incarceration. DisCrit centered this recovery work by exploring ways girls of color with dis/abilities were identified as different, labeled as deficit, removed for curing, and punished for deviating from the norm.

Collaborating with young people of color with dis/abilities was also detection work as it necessitated understanding how those individuals transformed the consequential geographies through a sociospatial dialectic (C. M. Bell, 2011). For me, this began by exploring the consequential geographies of the School-to-Prison Pipeline and linking it to the carceral state. Through juxtaposing the master-narrative of girls as criminals with little conscious against the counter-narrative of the girls as ones sought out and punished by the school–prison nexus for their differences, DisCrit demanded humanizing approaches to research, in the form of EJMs, for young people of color with dis/abilities to tell their stories. In addition, DisCrit afforded an opportunity for a spatial analysis, recognizing how racism and ableism quarantined bodies when they would not conform. Through their multidimensional counter-cartographies, these girls of color with dis/abilities told stories of carceral state violence and their resistance to that violence (Annamma, 2016).

Returning to the tragic death of 16-year-old Gynnya McMillen, there is much we do not know about her life. It was never reported whether or not she had a dis/ability label. However, the placement she had been at prior to that fateful night described itself this way, "Maryhurst provides residential, in-home and community-based treatment programs to children with severe emotional disabilities, most often caused by traumatic experiences of abuse and neglect" (Maryhurst, 2016). In this recovery and detection work, McMillen's case is both heartbreaking and telling. After a domestic dispute in her mother's home, she was labeled as a criminal and taken to a juvenile incarceration setting, a decision that was not in tandem with the 2014 reform of Kentucky law to keep low-level "offenders" out of the court system (Lee, 2016). Once there, Gynnya refused to comply and instead of de-escalating, the carceral state agents responded by physically restraining her, a decision that ended her life. Gynnya was treated as a dangerous entity, criminalized and punished for simply being a Black girl with a dis/ability in distress.

The abuse and neglect that Maryhurst described above did not simply come through individual interactions but at the hands of the carceral state. Gynnya was treated as problematic based on her dis/abled Black girlhood in a carceral state. Like many of the girls in this study, Gynnya experienced carceral logics applied to her unwanted body and the carceral state dis/abled her by creating a criminal identity, one where

she was only perpetrator—never victim in need of support, not capable Black girl who resisted violence—only dangerous body that needed to be reprimanded. Though McMillen's case was extreme, it was cautionary. Girls of color with dis/abilities were in danger of being surveilled, labeled, and punished in the consequential geographies of the school–prison nexus. Though physical death was not the expected outcome for incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities, McMillen's case illustrated that it did happen. Moreover, many arms of the carceral state rely on physical coercion of Black and Brown female bodies. Even in the absence of bodily force, the carceral state was guilty of attempting to "spirit-murder" these girls of color with dis/abilities, that is to assault them deeply with racism and ableism (Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Williams, 1987). Though I do not claim that Education Journey Mapping can undo years of attempted spirit-murder by the carceral state, I argue that the methodological contribution of EJMs provided opportunities to center the counter-cartographies of people of color with dis/abilities. EJMs allowed incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities to be more equal partners in the research process. What I found when we collaborated to create and analyze EJMs was that incarcerated girls of color with dis/abilities experienced carceral state violence in many forms but were masters at navigating and re-boundarying consequential geographies.

## Author's Note

## Acknowledgments

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

## Funding

## Notes

1. I deliberately use "dis/ability" instead of "disability" throughout this article for several reasons including to (a) acknowledge how the former is linked with deficit and has come to represent a person as "unable" to traverse society, (b) reject equating disability with insufficiency, (c) recognize the ways society and environments disable people, and (d) honor those who claim the term as a political and social identity. Though this term is not perfect (see Smith, 2016 for valid and important critique), it most closely aligns with my theoretical framing.

2. For information on the larger study, including site and participant descriptions, methodology, and analysis, see Annamma (2014, 2015, 2016).

3. All names of states, departments, schools, and people were pseudonyms.

4. Because of the doubly sensitive nature of the students (younger than 18 years and incarcerated), no specific details about participants are provided.

5. This adaptation of Identity Mapping and Gallery walk (described below) was done with the guidance of Michelle Fine. I want to acknowledge and thank her for her time and support.

6. This study occurred in juvenile jails where missing pencils resulted in strip searches; therefore each had to be meticulously accounted for after every meeting. The students did all the counting of materials themselves and were kind enough to help me keep track of things. In an environment where pencils were considered weapons, we had to be very diligent because I had, what staff considered, to be a bag of ammunition with me at all times. This is essential to note so as to recognize that even the most mundane items are criminalized in incarceration.

7. For example, in the larger study, data collection consisted of multiple interviews with school and security staff (19) and students (34), classroom observations (105), document analysis (40), and participant data analysis.

8. My own additional data analysis for the larger project can be found in Annamma (2015).

9. The way I represent data reflects decisions I made. Transcriptions were initially extremely detailed, providing signals for breaths, pauses, and laughing. However, this process meant important meanings were becoming lost in the detailed transcriptions and I therefore went back and transcribed words only without the additional information. At times, I provide themes by excluding some data or combing data from several conversations (denoting by . . . ).

10. The limitations of this research partnership were built into the sites in which I chose to work; juvenile incarceration settings were rooted in surveillance. There was simply rarely a time we could work without surveillance; even when we were in a separate room, there was most often someone monitoring us visually. The girls could not be full research team members because of this incarceration and therefore severely limited in interactions which, in turn, limited the research activities in which they could be a part (e.g., creating research question, building data collection methods).

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