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# Leadership Fellows PROPOSAL

Document Status: With Submitter

AHRC Reference:

## Leadership Fellows (Open Call)

### Organisation where the Fellowship would be held

Organisation	The University of Manchester	Research Organisation Reference:	Quinn Leadership
Division or Department	Arts Languages and Cultures		

### Title of Proposed Research [up to 150 chars]

Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture

### Start Date and Duration

a. Proposed start date  b. Duration of the grant (months)

### Applicants

Role	Name	Organisation	Division or Department
Fellow	Dr Eithne Quinn	The University of Manchester	Arts Languages and Cultures

### Sabbaticals and Research Leave

Please enter details of any sabbaticals or research leave taken within the last three years.

Sabbatical Start Date	Details
01 September 2018	Institutional research leave: semester 1 2018-19.

### Data Management

Has this proposal been written in line with your organisation's and AHRC's data management policies? See Help for full details.

Yes

## Objectives

List the main objectives of the proposed research in order of priority [up to 4000 chars]

This project explores and evaluates how UK rap music has come to be used as evidence in criminal proceedings since the mid-2000s and it seeks to intervene in this legal practice. Rap music -- spoken-word verse over instrumentation -- is the hugely popular musical component of hip hop culture, which was first developed by black and working-class youth in 1970s New York and went on to become the foremost pop-cultural youth form internationally. Some young people have forged high-profile careers in UK rap and many more amateur rappers have composed rhymes to perform to friends and filmed rap videos on their phones to share via social media. Many of these rappers are black and working class. If they come under suspicion of a crime or of anti-social behaviour, police have increasingly sought to seize on their rap lyrics and videos, looking for material that features violent and criminal themes, to use as legal evidence against them. It can be very effective. Defendant-authored rap music has been presented as evidence to 'prove' variously: confession, motive, bad character, gang association, and intent to commit violence.

This project will lead a scholarly exploration of and practical interjection into such criminal justice use of black working-class musical culture. It will:

1. Set the research agenda in this subfield by developing interdisciplinary cultural studies arguments that complicate the overly literal and criminological readings of rap music made by prosecutors in legal cases and reproduced in much of the social science scholarship. This will be done by co-authoring (PI and PDRA) two peer-reviewed articles for leading journals, holding an international conference and editing a journal special issue with a substantial introduction that stakes out the field.
2. Produce empirically-rooted, cutting-edge arguments that draw on the wealth of court case materials (rap texts, police statements, legal argument transcripts, prosecution opening notes, judicial decisions, appeals, etc.) from the trials the PI has worked on as a rap defence expert over the last decade, including c.35,000 words of expert reports she has authored.
3. Address the current asymmetry between poorly-resourced criminal defence counsels and well-resourced prosecution counsels (who routinely use police officers as rap expert witnesses in court cases). This will be done through an impact programme focused on producing a handbook on rap evidence to support defence lawyers and assembling and training a small pool of UK rap scholars as defence expert witnesses. The programme will be facilitated and amplified by the PI's partnerships with the leading US rap-on-trial scholar-experts.
4. Examine how rap music is used to establish 'gang' belonging on police databases and 'dangerous association' in joint enterprise cases, and consider whether this is feeding into the overrepresentation of young black people in the UK penal system.
5. Communicate (through press releases, blogs, and press articles) with journalists, lawyers, and policymakers, and partner with civil liberties groups and community activists, to enhance understanding and maximize intervention in this topical yet poorly understood area.

This research and impact programme will cement the PI's role as an international leader in the area, while fostering the researcher capabilities of the PDRA and other emerging and non-traditional scholars in the subfield.

## Summary

Describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience [up to 4000 chars].

Note that this summary may be published on the AHRC's website in the event that a grant is awarded

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people are heavily overrepresented in the criminal justice system of England and Wales. While they make up 14% of the population, they represent 25% of adult prisoners and an alarming 41% of under 18s in custody. These figures led Theresa May to commission a review into the treatment and outcomes of BAME people in the criminal justice system and the resulting high-profile Lammy Report (2017) revealed a lack of scrutiny in policing and prosecution processes that is fostering unfair outcomes, especially for BAME youth. Lammy's findings have since been amplified by reports from the UN (2018) and Amnesty International (2018), which both suggest that UK policing and prosecuting practices toward young black men are contravening human rights laws.

One under-scrutinized area that may be feeding into these disparities is how police and prosecutors are using black youth expressive culture as evidence to shore up their criminal cases. Since the arrival of Grime in the early 2000s in London, UK rap has become hugely popular, producing household-names like Dizzee Rascal, Wiley and Stormzy. Many young people emulate these rap stars by composing rap verse and making amateur videos which they post on digital platforms for free. However, if these young people fall under suspicion of gang involvement or a crime, the police have increasingly come to search their phones and bedrooms for rap lyrics and trawl the internet for videos to help build a case against them.

Rap is a slippery form of expression and entertainment that should be used with extreme caution by prosecutors. Because the young people who make rap are often poor and black, the danger is that rap music works in inflammatory ways for the prosecution, confirming stereotypical ideas for majority-white judge and jurors about young black men. Preliminary findings suggest that rap can work powerfully as a pathway to conviction, even sometimes in cases in which there is a shortage of conventional evidence.

Some types of rap music are no doubt vulnerable to such use by the criminal justice system. Some Grime and most Drill rap strikes a menacing pose, claims to 'keep it real', and includes violent 'badman' themes. This music can be disturbing (indeed, one of Drill's intentions is to provoke). But the lyrics are by no means simply autobiographical and realist. Instead, it combines elements of autobiography with black folklore, working-class youth alienation, macho swagger, and commercial formula, operating in a broader pop-culture landscape for young men in which violent and criminal themes are pervasive (e.g. violent gaming culture, action and gangster films, etc.).

The introduction of rap culture into legal cases typically goes uncontested by defence counsels. Defendants in these cases are very rarely called to the stand in their own trials. Therefore, the use of rap by the Crown is not normally scrutinized or contested. This is especially worrying when rap is used in serious crime and joint enterprise cases, including murder trials that carry mandatory life sentences.

This project will bring the kind of much-needed scrutiny called for in David Lammy's report to the legal use of rap culture in order to help ensure fairer trials. It will: foster the development of rich, interdisciplinary arguments about rap to enhance understanding; support defence counsels by developing a handbook on how rap evidence can be contested; coach new scholar-defence experts who can scrutinize this legal use; engage with the media and public to raise awareness; and work with advocacy groups to communicate with policymakers and challenge prosecuting rap trends and the wider criminalization of black youth.

## Outputs

### The main outputs of the research

Critical edition
Journal article (refereed)
Conference paper
Performance, film or recording
Artefact, work of art
Teaching Material
Expertise gained through the application of research in a non-academic environment
Other (please specify)
If Other,
Rap evidence handbook for defence lawyers and expert witnesses.

## Ethical Information

Are there ethical implications arising from the proposed research ?

Yes

Provide details of what they are and how they would be addressed [up to 1000 characters]

The PI will check with her Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and Ethics Signatory at University of Manchester if any of the legal documents that she wants to draw on require approval. She will follow all the institutional ethics advice she receives, and will seek consent for, remove or anonymize (as per advice) any document that is classed as confidential. Person-identifiable legal data will be anonymized to minimize the need for Ethical Review. Ethical approval and guidance will also be needed for the open-access filmed interviews, because of the sensitive nature of the interview topic (which may raise personal questions about race, class and criminal justice) and, in the case of recordings of conference presentations, participants will be asked prior to recording to sign a form agreeing for website upload, uploading only those who have offered such agreement.

Does the institution have a policy on good conduct in research?

Yes

Details of where the policy can be accessed

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/>

## Academic Beneficiaries

Describe who will benefit from the research [up to 4000 chars].

Prosecuting Rap speaks in fresh ways to enduring questions about the social relations of culture, working across the intersections of race, class, youth culture, media, and criminal justice. Given the salience of the topic, combined with a lack of previous close scholarly attention, this interdisciplinary project will have multiple academic beneficiaries. Notably, it will benefit students and scholars from the disciplines of:

- a) Cultural studies (popular music studies; subcultural studies; cultural industries studies; cultural history; media studies). Most of the extant popular music scholarship on UK rap interprets it as a productive cultural voicing of resistance, artistry, representation and enterprise, with little attention paid to how it is ending up as criminal evidence and the uncomfortable questions this raises (see CfS Context). Prosecuting Rap will expose this neglected terrain, excavating the little-known risk factors that derive from the repressive state's evidentiary uses of rap culture. It will develop an impact model for cultural studies research that demonstrates how impact activities can themselves, in turn, be channeled back into generating and refining real-world-informed cultural studies research questions.
- b) Race studies (black studies; critical race theory). While the recent history of race and racism is a central, established analytic field in arts and humanities scholarly enquiry in the US, it has been less fully explored in the UK context (see CfS Context). Prosecuting Rap will contribute to the growing research area that explores Britain's contemporary racial trends, focusing on black diasporic cultural studies (rap's complex representational politics and relationship to the penal state) and critical race theory (white discourses and practices of the criminal justice system, often uncritically reproduced in print media debate).
- c) Criminology and legal studies. Too often, when criminologists, especially gang experts, invoke rap music, they frame it simply as an incriminating off-shoot of serious youth crime. Prosecuting Rap will be of importance to the growing number of critical criminologists who are deeply sceptical of such interpretations and want complex and credible interdisciplinary explanations of the relationship between criminal justice and rap music.

For methods of scholarly dissemination see CfS Dissemination 1-4 and for evidence of an excellent publication track-record

### Impact Summary

Impact Summary (please refer to the help for guidance on what to consider when completing this section) [up to 4000 chars]

When rap is used as evidence in criminal cases by prosecutors, it is decoded by police officers who act as expert witnesses for the Crown. Many defence lawyers have little conversance with rap music and do not know that they can call their own rap experts to scrutinize and contest these police interpretations. This project will collate and distill the powerful arguments developed by those individual defence counsels who have mounted robust challenges to rap evidence and disseminate them to a much wider pool of hard-pressed and often atomized criminal defence lawyers. It will do so by producing a handbook on rap evidence for defence lawyers to consult. To contest the rap evidence, defence lawyers, facing heavily straitened legal aid budgets, need rap scholars to serve as expert witnesses. Such experts are currently in short supply. The project will thus forge a small network of new rap scholar experts. Training scholars as defence experts - who can use, and also help co-produce, the rap evidence handbook over the course of the project - will build capacity in this niche but vital area. These impact activities will be supported by and feed into the work of leading US 'rap on trial' scholar-experts.

The core message the project will lead on for the impact pathways (subject to review and refinement as the project progresses) is that young people's rap music has no place in courtrooms unless it is explicitly and directly connected to the incident at hand and even then, given its inflammatory and ambivalent nature, it needs very careful scrutiny.

As well as improving processes on individual cases, the impact strategy will feed into broader critiques of the stigmatization and criminalization of young black people in contemporary Britain. In particular, the innovative impact pathways will work to contest (1) the harm of police gang databases, which have been identified in a 2018 United Nations report as contravening the human rights of young black men; and (2) the controversial joint enterprise doctrine, currently under review, with its troubling racial disparities in charging, conviction, and sentencing rates. The majority of court cases the PI has worked on relied on police database evidence in which rap music is itself a criterion of gang membership and the majority were also joint enterprise (or conspiracy) cases, in which multiple defendants were in the dock. This project will expose how black culture is mobilized in little-known but inflammatory ways to forward these policing and prosecuting strategies. The use of rap music evidence in joint enterprise cases and on gang databases needs attention to guard against possible human rights violations and miscarriages of justice. This project will partner with groups like JENGBA (Joint Enterprise: Not Guilty By Association) and Stopwatch (Research and Action on Fair and Accountable Policing) in the UK, and the UC Irvine Law School Center in the US, bolstering advocacy work by targeting policymakers, legal professionals and publics (see Impact Pathways).

The PI already has an established impact track record as a rap expert in individual trials, having worked on cases in which the rap 'evidence' the prosecution sought to rely on was ruled inadmissible by the judge and excluded pre-trial (including two murder cases in 2010 and 2017). In a further three trials in which her legal reports and/or court testimony scrutinized the significance of the rap evidence, the defendants were acquitted (2014, 2017 and 2018). By fostering a small, self-sustaining network of defence scholar-experts who can critically examine the legal use of rap, linking up these new experts with criminal defence lawyers, and bringing this work to the attention of advocacy groups and policymakers, this project will engage in legal-impact capacity building.

### Head of Department Statement

The Head of Department or member of the Host Institution, as applicable, will complete a statement of support as a separate attachment

<b>Name</b>	Professor Peter Knight
<b>Organisation</b>	The University of Manchester
<b>Division or Department</b>	Arts Languages and Cultures
<b>Post Held</b>	Senior Lecturer in American Literature

## Summary of Resources Required for Project

### Financial resources

Summary fund heading	Fund heading	Full economic Cost	AHRC contribution	% AHRC contribution
Directly Incurred	Staff	██████████	██████████	80
	Travel & Subsistence	12792.00	10233.60	80
	Other Costs	██████████	██████████	80
	<b>Sub-total</b>	██████████	██████████	
Directly Allocated	Investigators	██████████	██████████	80
	Estates Costs	██████████	██████████	80
	Other Directly Allocated	██████████	██████████	80
	<b>Sub-total</b>	██████████	██████████	
Indirect Costs	Indirect Costs	██████████	██████████	80
	<b>Total</b>	██████████	██████████	

### Summary of staff effort requested

	Months
Investigator	12
Researcher	12
Technician	0
Other	0
Visiting Researcher	0
Student	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

## Other Support

Details of support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in the same field.  
Other support is not relevant to this application.

**Staff**

**Directly Incurred Posts**

Role	Name /Post Identifier	Start Date	EFFORT ON PROJECT		Scale	Increment Date	Basic Starting Salary	London Allowance (£)	Super-annuation and NI (£)	Total cost on grant (£)
			Period on Project (months)	% of Full Time						
Fellow	Dr Eithne Quinn	01/01/2020	18	67	█	██████	████	█	████	████
Researcher	Post Doctoral Research Assistant	01/01/2020	12	100	█	██████	████	●	████	████
Total										████



### Travel and Subsistence

Destination and purpose		Total £
Within UK	Travel, Accommodation and Subsistence Costs for Legal Transcripts and research interviews: PI and RA	1030
Outside UK	Travel and Subsistence Costs for US research trip	2020
Within UK	Travel and Accommodation Costs for Keynote Speaker and 25 non-Manchester delegates for Manchester International one-day conference	4800
Within UK	Travel and Accommodation Costs for UK research dissemination	1380
Within UK	Travel and Accommodation Costs for Impact Activities workshops	2522
Within UK	Travel Costs for launch of lawyer handbook	400
Within UK	Travel costs for interviewer and filmmaker	640
Total £		12792

### Other Directly Incurred Costs

Description	Total £	
Publicity flyers and printing	150	
Funding for transcription services	█	
Manchester International one-day conference: lunch, dinner and refreshments	1235	
UK research dissemination: Conference fees for 3 panellists	█	
Lunch, dinner and refreshments for Impact Activities workshops	652	
Filmmaker Fee for filming and post-production incl travel	█	
Inclusion of graphic images in film	720	
Reception for launch of lawyer handbook	250	
Total £		█

### Estates Costs

Amount (mandatory)	█
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### Indirect Costs

Amount (mandatory)	█
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**Project Partners:** details of partners in the project and their contributions to the research. These contributions are in addition to resources identified above.

1	Name of partner organisation	Division or Department	Name of contact		
	Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust	Educational Outreach Dept.	Ms Laura Briggs		
Direct contribution to project			Indirect contribution to project		
	Description	Value £		Description	Value £
cash			use of facilities/ equipment	venue and reception	█
equipment/ materials			staff time	2 days (█ per day)	█
secondme nt of staff			other		
other			Sub-Total		█
Sub-Total		0		Total Contribution	█

Total Contribution from all Project partners

█
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## Proposal Classifications

### Research Area:

Research Areas are the subject areas in which the research proposal may fall and you should select at least one of these. Once you have selected the relevant Research Area(s), please ensure that you set one as primary.

To add or remove Research Areas use the relevant link below. To set a primary area, click in the corresponding checkbox and then the Set Primary Area button that will appear.

Subject	Topic	Keyword
Cultural and museum studies	Cultural Studies & Pop Culture	
Music	Popular Music [Primary]	
Sociology	Ethnicity	

### Qualifier:

Qualifiers are terms that further describe the area of your research and cover aspects such as approach, time period, and geographical focus. Please ensure you complete this section if relevant.

To add or remove Qualifiers use the links below.

Type	Name
Approach	Exploitation of existing datasets
Approach	International Comparative
Approach	Knowledge exchange
Approach	Qualitative
Approach	Training oriented
Collaboration location region	England
Collaboration location region	North America
Collaboration location region	UK & Ireland
Geographic Area	England
Geographic Area	UK & Ireland
Project Engagement by Sector	Academic Users
Project Engagement by Sector	General Public
Project Engagement by Sector	Other Public Sector
Project Engagement by Sector	Press and Media
Project Engagement by Sector	Student Teachers & Undergrads
Project Engagement by Sector	Third Sector
Time Period	Contemporary

### Free-text Keywords:

Free-text keywords may be used to describe the subject area of the proposal in more detail. It is particularly important that you provide these where the Research Area(s) you have selected are only defined to two levels.

To add or remove those previously added use the links below.

Free-text Keywords
criminal justice
rap music

### Classification

Is your research multidisciplinary (i.e. involves researchers from two or more different disciplines)?

Yes  No

Is your research interdisciplinary (i.e. applies methods and approaches of several disciplines)?

Yes No

## Quinn\_Justification of Resources

### Directly Incurred Staff Costs

The project runs for 18 months (for the period January 2020 to June 2021).

PI time (6 months at 0.8FTE; 12 months at 0.6FTE); PDRA time (first 12 months at 1.0FTE)

**The PI** will work on the project for .8FTE during the first 6 months, followed by 12 months at .6FTE. She needs this amount of time to build her networks, conduct her research, support the PDRA, start writing up new research, engage relevant publics, and roll out her ambitious impact agenda. The slightly front-loaded .8FTE in the first 6 months will give the PI sufficient time to prioritize primary research and build her research programme, including her research trip to the US, while also opening space to establish the project's innovative impact pathways (defence lawyer handbook and scholar-expert training) as early as possible. She then needs .6FTE for 12 months in order to: complete top-tier journal articles and write the subfield-defining special issue introduction; edit the scholarly essays in the journal special issue; disseminate findings; continue to support the PDRA and other emerging scholars in the network; undertake interventionist public/policy engagement; and fully realize the project's impact potential. The early impact activity also allows for its activities to be reflexively fed into the scholarly outputs and lawyer handbook updates later in the Fellowship. The PI will continue to act as lead supervisor for 2 PhD students. If the ESRC CoDE centre bid is successful, the PI will have a further 0.2FTE of time (across the 18 month period) devoted to building a complementary (though not overlapping nor co-dependent) database of UK court cases involving rap (see Cfs Research Methods). **SUBTOTAL:** [REDACTED]

**The PDRA** will devote 100% of his/her time for the first 12 months of the project. This will enable him/her to engage fully in the research, impact and administrative activities of the project's first year so as to maximize career development (see Project Management Plan). This includes co-authoring two journal articles; conducting some of the filmed interviews for public dissemination; co-writing a press article; and helping organize research and dissemination activities, including devoting an average of 1.5 hours p/w to disseminating project-related activities on social media via Twitter. The PDRA will likely be a BAME person, drawn from a pool of early career race and culture sociologists, from Quinn's UK networks. Thus, it is intended that the skill-set of the PDRA will strengthen the interdisciplinary dimensions and networks of the project, supplementing as well as complementing the PI's arts and humanities expertise. A PDRA on a full 1.0 FTE will maximize the chances of successful recruitment and retention. **SUBTOTAL:** [REDACTED]

### Other Directly Incurred Costs

#### **RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

##### **Legal transcripts & research interviews (with lawyers, advisors, and other stakeholders)**

Interviews/advisory/networking meetings will be clustered where possible. Return train fares from Manchester to London (90 x 3 =) **£270** and Midlands (50 x 2 =) **£100**; interview/networking lunches etc. (12 x 25 =) **£300**. Accommodation in London for PI/RA 3 nights (120 x 3 =) **£360**

Funding for transcription services on targeted court case statements (prosecution opening notes and judge's summing up etc.) on cases in which the PI has not served as an expert (to be done by go-to professional legal transcribing service MLS Crown, which Quinn has used before) [REDACTED]

**SUBTOTAL:** [REDACTED]

##### **US research trip**

PI's research trip to US (9 nights): Flight to LA **£550**; return train tickets LA to UC Santa Barbara **£160** and LA to UC Irvine **£140**. Accommodation for 9 nights **£900**; Subsistence for 9 nights (9 x 30 =) **£270**

The PI will exchange knowledge with the leading US rap scholar-experts, learning from and advising on the best impact strategies in the field, developing her networks at UCLA's Bunche Center; UC Santa Barbara's UC Center for New Racial Studies; and UC Irvine's Criminology & Law School.

**SUBTOTAL: £2020**

## Quinn\_Justification of Resources

### **Manchester international one-day conference**

The conference will be held on campus. Keynote Professor Charis Kubrin (UC Irvine)'s flight and other travel costs Irvine, CA to Manchester **£800**; and keynote hotel with breakfast (3 nights x 130) **£390**. Second US scholar will participate via Skype to minimize carbon costs (free of charge). Accommodation for 25 non-Manchester delegates (25 x 122 B&B at on-campus Crowne Plaza) = **£3050**. 8 x return train fares to Manchester from various parts of UK for PGs, activists, and adjuncts (70 x 8) = **£560**. Lunch for 30 = **£360**; tea and coffee for 30 = **£100**; dinner for 25 (at 25 pp) = **£625**. Event recording: free of charge – camera and mike to be set up by UoM media services staff; conference proceedings posted online by UoM IT staff. Eve of conference dinner for 6 participants (6 x 25) = **£150**

**SUBTOTAL: £6035**

### **UK research dissemination: MeCCSA and one other (target: BSA) conference panels**

Conference fees for 3 panellists (incl. PI and PDRA) (100 each) x 2 conferences = [REDACTED] Travel (80) x 3 panellists x 2 confs = **£480**; accommodation 75 p/n x 3 panellist s x 2 nights average x 2 confs = **£900**

**SUBTOTAL: [REDACTED]**

### **IMPACT ACTIVITIES**

#### **2 Manchester expert witness training workshops (c.8 participants per event)**

Train fares to Manchester from various parts of UK (5 x 80 = 400) x 2 events = **£800**. Hotel for 3 expert-trainee guests for 1 night (122 B&B pp) at each event: 3 x 122 x 2 events = **£732**. Each event: lunch for 8 (8 x 12 = 96), dinner for 6 (25pp = 150), refreshments (80) x 2 events = **£652**

Venues (UoM campus and AIUET free of charge. TRAINING EVENT 1 ONLY: Return air fare of US scholar-expert witness Dr Erik Nielson, New York to Manchester + internal travel **£600**; and hotel B&B x 3 nights (3 x 130 = ) **£390**

**SUBTOTAL: £3174**

#### **Production, launch and online dissemination of prosecuting rap lawyer handbook**

Publicity flyers and printing **£150**; Launch event at conference: travel (4 x return fares and local travel London to Manchester (4 x 100 =) **£400** and reception for 30 (drinks etc.) = **£250** hosted at Manchester Central Library (venue free of charge) by Project Partner AIUET (in-kind contribution £800). Online handbook promoted and linked through UoM's research beacon site free of charge (saving the project standalone website and publicity costs).

**SUBTOTAL: £800**

#### **Five filmed interviews (including graphic images) with stakeholders disseminated online**

Filmmaker 2.5 days of travel and filming (own equipment) and 1 day post-production (daily rate: [REDACTED] x 3.5 days =) [REDACTED] travel costs for interviewer and filmmaker (4 x 2 x 80 =) **£640**. Inclusion of graphic images in films (artist 120 per image x 6 =) **£720**. The filmmaker will be recruited through UoM's CoDE which has experience of working with free-lance filmmakers and research communicators, including BAME freelancers who will be targeted. Interviews to be promoted and linked through UoM's research Beacon page free of charge.

**SUBTOTAL: [REDACTED]**

This project explores how UK rap music is used as evidence in court cases since the mid-2000s. It will: foster the development of interdisciplinary cultural studies arguments about rap to enhance understanding; support defence counsels by developing a handbook about how to contest the use of rap evidence; coach new scholar-defence experts who can scrutinize this legal use; communicate with the media and public to raise awareness; and work with advocacy groups to communicate with policymakers and challenge ‘prosecuting rap’ trends and the wider criminalization of black youth.

**1. Briefly introduce types of data the research will create. Why did you decide to use these types?** The project will create three types of data using standard, open formats that enable long term accessibility. First, the project will create a series of five filmed interviews conducted by the PI and RA with different stakeholders and made by a professional filmmaker, ensuring quality of data created. On the same data format, the project will make a video and/or audio recording of panels and lectures from the international conference (recording equipment provided and set up by the Uni. of Manchester media services team). All film and audio data will likely be created as MP4 and MP3 files. Second, and accompanying the filmed interviews, will be a series of 6 ‘research-communication’ illustrations to be made by an artist and saved as PDF files. Finally, the project will create an 8-page handbook for defence lawyers on how to handle rap evidence in criminal proceedings, created as a MS Word (docx) and then saved for public sharing as a PDF. These three data types will suit research and impact targeting various stakeholders.

**2. Give details on the proposed methodologies that will be used to create the data.** The PI and RA will select the stakeholders for the 12-minute interviews, hire a filmmaker and a graphic artist, and produce the films over a 6-week period and the data stored. The PI will write the handbook, storing all data. The conference proceedings (month 9) will be recorded (subject to the granting of consent forms) by UoM media services staff and the data stored.

**3. How will the data be stored in the short term?** Once generated, all data will be deposited with the UoM ‘Research Data Storage’ (RDS) which is secure, replicated and managed by UoM’s IT Services. The project will receive 8TB of RDS replicated storage free at point of use (much more than enough to cover data requirements). The collecting and short-term storage of the audio/video data will follow UoM’s Standard Operating Procedure (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=38446%20>) (SOP), with all information stored and handled in a manner appropriate to its security classification. The RDS is underpinned by a Research Data Management Policy and appropriate governance of senior bodies to enable sustainability of the service. Data management and preservation will be managed by the UoM IT Services Research Support Team. The team has extensive experience in supporting research projects managed by UoM staff. The team will also provide general IT assistance and advice.

**3a. What backup will you have in the in-project period to ensure no data is lost?** See above. UoM RDS is replicated and snapped to support the requirement around backup. It is a highly resilient service with scheduled daily backups to a second set of storage hardware in a different location.

**4. How the data will be stored in the long term?** All data generated by the project will remain deposited with the UoM RDS. The processed data for public sharing will also be stored long-term using Mendeley Data (UoM’s recommended general-purpose, open research data repository) with links from the UoM’s Beacon webpages.

**4a. Where have you decided to store it, why is this appropriate?** The UoM RDS is aligned with AHRC guidelines on retention of research outputs. We will also store the audio-visual and PDF materials (subject to ethical guidelines and participant consent, see 6a and 6b below) in Mendeley Data, which is a secure, openly-accessible storage option, which is archived with Data Archiving and Network Services (DANS) to preserve data over the long term. The project will store paper format participant consent forms and information sheets in a locked filing cabinet in secure UoM facilities, and securely digitize these materials.

**4b. How long will it be stored for and why?** The UoM RDS allows researchers to store, manage and curate their data, as well as preserve data after project completion, with maintenance guaranteed for 10 years after the project closes. Ongoing retention will be reviewed at that time and will include

assessment of the project's success and ongoing data management needs. The project's UoM Beacon webpage will remain as an open access resource and continue to be supported for a minimum of three years after the project closes, to be reviewed at that time.

**4c. Costs of storage – why are these appropriate?** There are no storage costs: UoM RDS provides up to 8TB of project storage free at point of use (which is more than sufficient for this project); Mendeley Data does not apply any ingest costs.

**5. How the data will be shared and the value it will have to others. 5a. How the data will enhance the area and how it could be used in the future?** The three types of open-access data will provide a range of stakeholders with valuable material. As well as students and scholars, who can use the material in teaching and research, the data are intended to raise awareness about issues to do with race, class, culture and criminal justice as well as to intervene in court cases and law reform. The open access handbook is intended for use by defence lawyers and expert witnesses, as well as being a research resource for use in classrooms and scholarly material (Mendeley Data will give the handbook a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) which will be used for document reference). The video/audio recordings of interviews and workshop presentations can be used as reference materials for scholars of race, youth culture and criminology, as well as to engage and inform wider publics (including young people and their communities, advocacy groups, and journalists). In discussion with Marketing and Communications at UoM, the PI decided that, to maximize promotion and minimize the sustainability issues associated with creating a new stand-alone website (set up approx. £1,250.00), that the films, handbook and recorded conference proceedings will (subject to ethical approval) all be linked through a new page devoted to the project on UoM's Global Inequalities Beacon website (<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/beacons/global-inequalities/>).

**5b. Releasing the data – advise when you will be releasing and justify if not releasing in line with AHRC guidelines of a minimum of three years. If the data will have value to different audiences, how these groups will be informed?** All data above released within the 18 month lifetime of the project (as per workplan). The UoM Marketing & Comms team identified this project as one they want to promote through Beacon and this will help ensure that audiences are informed of release. The rap evidence handbook launch will coincide with the conference (month 9 of project), at which lawyers and advocacy groups will participate, and media and policymakers invited. The publication of data will be publicised on relevant list-serves. Appropriate metadata will be published to enable reuse, including making deposits in Mendeley Data repository fully discoverable.

**5c. Will the data need to be updated? Include future plans for updating if this is the case.** Recorded and graphic data will not be updated after the project's end. The handbook may be updated beyond the project's life-cycle in which case the new data will be stored on Mendeley Data, with updated versioning and DOI. The Beacon page will become one of a number of legacy pages attached to Global Inequalities (including former AHRC projects).

**5d. Will the data be open or will you charge for it? Justify if charging to access the data.** The project data will remain as open access resources.

**5e. Financial requirements of sharing – include full justification in the JoR:** N/A.

**6a. Any legal and ethical considerations of collecting the data** The PI has already consulted with relevant UoM support teams: the [Information Governance Office](#) to consider data protection issues; and the [Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity](#) team on matters of ethical approval, which will be needed for the open-access filmed interviews, because of the sensitive nature of the interview topic, which raises personal questions about race, class and criminal justice. If awarded, the PI will take guidance from the IGO and RGEL, working with these dedicated university support teams.

**6b. Legal and ethical considerations around releasing and storing the data – anonymity of any participants, following promises made to participants.** In the case of recordings of conference presentations we will ask participants prior to recording to sign a form agreeing for website upload, uploading only those who have offered such agreement. Data from filmed interviews will also be made openly available, subject to ethics approval and appropriate participant consent.

## **Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture**

### **Research questions**

Rap music has become an extremely popular youth-cultural genre in Britain, its influence felt not just in music but also in fashion, television, advertising and video games. Though it has a longer history and includes a range of styles, UK rap first fully established itself in early-2000s London, with the emergence of the home-grown rap subgenre Grime (known for aggressive delivery, wit and urban themes over syncopated beats), accompanied since around 2012 by controversial UK Drill (a type of gangsta rap with violent and territorial themes that combines a dead-pan flow with catchy, minor-keyed instrumentation). In criminal investigations, police look for violent lyrics and video imagery from these popular types of rap made by suspects to help them build cases; in court, prosecutors play the music, asking the judge and jury to interpret it as a literal statement of confession, bad character, dangerous association, and/or intent to commit crime. As one prosecution opening note contended in the case *R v. C* (2008), the rap verse, full of stock violent boasting, was ‘a blueprint for the murder’, and such statements tend to set the tone for the media coverage of these cases. Prosecuting Rap will detail, explain and evaluate such incriminating and instrumental interpretations of rap music by bringing interdisciplinary arts and humanities perspectives to bear. Focusing on key sites of UK rap culture in London and Manchester, as well as smaller sites in Nottingham and Bedford, this project will not only stake out the terms of scholarly debate for this phenomenon, but also try to intervene in the real-world uses of rap music in criminal justice processes.

Rap subgenres that include violent and criminal themes, rapped in the first-person, may well provoke literalist responses from some listeners, making the music susceptible to the Crown’s criminologic interpretations. This project will not shy away from considering the risk factors of some trends within rap (e.g. violent words inciting violent deeds; glamorization of street gangs; normalization of carrying knives, etc.), especially in light of the recent rise in knife crime among young black men in London. Indeed, the PI has already encountered individual cases, in her court work, in which violent rap lyrics and videos have incited violence and in such cases the music in question clearly has probative value. However, in the majority of cases in which she has been instructed there was no direct correlation between the rap lyrics adduced by the Crown and the violent incident under investigation. In such cases, the danger—to be explored and evaluated in this project—is that race and class bias, rather than hard evidentiary relevance, is helping create a sense of correlation between black expressive art and violent act.

Rap is overdetermined in its making and meaning, as the PI explored in her influential monograph *Nuthin’ but a G Thang: The Culture and Commerce of Gangsta Rap* (Columbia UP, 2005). By requisitioning and rewiring some of this book’s interdisciplinary cultural studies arguments about US gangsta rap music for the UK context, the PI will develop nuanced, UK-specific interpretations of rap on trial. Missing from the Crown’s realist framing is a sense that rap is a subcultural and pop-cultural form of creative expression that is made to amuse and impress peers; to negotiate identity and develop voice; to communicate alienation and resistance; as a means of modest income generation; and to fantasize about fame and wealth (with some high-profile rappers having enjoyed extreme social mobility). As such, as well as being part-autobiographical, the tall tales of rap music are typically performative, subaltern, formulaic and fictional. A starting point for this project is that these cultural, artistic and entrepreneurial properties should militate against overly literal courtroom interpretations of its violent and criminal-chic posturing.

Prosecuting Rap offers detailed readings of individual court cases to uncover the concrete discursive workings of rap music’s legal use. At the same time, these case studies will serve semi-allegorically, drawing outwards to gauge broader trends in the criminalization of rap music and young rappers. The interdisciplinary cultural studies approach—drawing on black studies, critical race studies, cultural industries studies, popular music studies, and media studies, combined with sociological, recent historiographical, and critical-criminological perspectives—will set the terms for a thorough investigation of the potential racialized implications of such practices. It will open an assessment of whether the legal use of rap is feeding into unfair disparities in the criminal justice system—

particularly in relation to its overrepresentation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people. It will also evaluate whether such prosecutorial use of black youth culture contributes to the ‘trust deficit’ of black communities toward the criminal justice system identified in the high-profile review conducted by David Lammy MP (2017).

Race is, however, by no means the sole analytic frame in this project. The interdisciplinary cultural studies approach will also be attuned to class dynamics in inequality Britain; to performative negotiations of masculinity in crisis-ridden patriarchal Britain; and to the digital surveillance of culture by a repressive (yet downsized) state. This project will use ideas from social theory about human capabilities (Sen, 1999; Hesmondhalgh, 2013, 2016) to explore how the legal use of youth culture as incriminating evidence might crystallize key constraints on capabilities in incarcerative and unequal neoliberal Britain. In turn, how might rappers be feeding these restricted capabilities reflexively into their music and videos? Young male rappers’ tendency towards self-criminalizing bluster (performatively posturing as a ‘thug’), though itself a complex response to social typecasting, can too easily feed stereotypical regimes, potentially leading young men into further material and discursive danger.

As well as examining discursive patterns in the cases themselves, the project will consider the media reception of rap’s legal journey. The media landscape is of course contradictory, and one objective of this project is to use media channels to raise awareness about prosecuting rap trends (by issuing press releases and writing a legal-trade and broadsheet press piece). However, the preliminary supposition to be tested in this project is that the print media coverage of court cases involving defendant-authored rap has, to date, too often uncritically reproduced the intersectional race/class frames of prosecutors.

Thus the research questions Prosecuting Rap addresses are:

1. How are rap lyrics and videos used in UK courtrooms? What definitions and frames are mobilized by prosecutors and is there evidence of racial bias in the legal use of rap, whereby its *prejudicial value* outweighs its *probative value*?
2. What role does the police play in UK prosecuting rap? Should the police force, which continues to face concerted criticism for institutional bias, be allowed to field rap expert witnesses for the prosecution, or is this practice antithetical to maintaining fair trials?
3. How has rap music been used in ‘common purpose’ serious-crime cases like joint enterprise in which there are multiple defendants in the dock often for a single act of violence perpetrated by one individual? Has black expressive culture been used to shore up the state’s gang narratives to secure group convictions, and what racial and civil liberties issues might this raise?
4. How has the print media chronicled UK prosecuting rap? To what extent do their interpretive frames reproduce the criminologic lens of prosecution counsels?
5. What properties of rap music make it susceptible to such legal use?
6. What are the most effective arguments that defence counsels can use to scrutinize and contest the Crown’s framing of this music? How can UK arts and humanities scholars (co-partnering with international rap-on-trial scholars) aid defence counsels to better probe and problematize rap’s usage in legal proceedings?
7. How can academics support community activists and advocacy groups and how can they communicate with policymakers and media to help ensure fair trials?

## Research context



UK rap music is a growing but still under-studied scholarly subfield. Given the explosion of UK rap since the early 2000s (with the emergence of Grime stars like Wiley and Dizzee Rascal) and given the socio-political relevance of this black youth cultural form, there is a pressing need for more academic research. The extant scholarship tends to focus on socially and aesthetically productive aspects of UK rap (eg White, 2016; Bramwell, 2015; Ilan, 2015; Hesmondhalgh and Melville, 2001; Dedman, 2011; Turner, 2017). Prosecuting Rap will draw on this emergent body of work to help develop its cultural studies approach. These studies show how rap negotiates deeply unequal racial and class power structures; aestheticizes and narrativizes black diasporic lived experience with wit, skill, and energy; and builds identities and makes money for marginalized young people of all colours in the cultural industries. However, UK rap scholarship has had little to say about rap's troubling relationship with the criminal justice system (for exceptions, see Street 2012 on the regulation of rap concerts; Johnson and Cloonan, 2009; and Gunter, 2017). Rap does crop up in social scientific accounts of gang formations, but generally these follow uncritical criminology assumptions, assuming the music to be the simple symbolic arm of gang life (Patton et al, 2018; Wijeratne et al, 2016).

While the use of rap in UK court cases has been the subject of very little scholarship, by contrast, in the US arena, some complex, interdisciplinary arguments have emerged. The scholarly subfield of US rap-on-trial sits within a broader and now mature field of Hip Hop Studies, which began with groundbreaking monographs by Trisha Rose (*Black Noise*, 1993), Robin Kelley (*Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!*, 1997), and S. Craig Watkins (*Representing*, 1998), and has gone on, as hip hop culture went mainstream, to map ever more divergent fields. Although there is still, to date, no monograph on the topic, US rap-on-trial scholarship ranges from defences of rap as art and entertainment (Nielson and Kubrin, 2014); to accounts of individual legal cases (Dennis, 2007); to the influence of rap on jurors in relation to conscious and unconscious racial bias (Dunbar, Kubrin, and Scurich, 2016; Tanovich, 2016); to work that thinks more broadly about the policing of black culture in relation to the New Jim Crow (Alexander, 2010; Butler, 2009) and mass incarceration (Gilmore, 2007).

Emergent US rap-on-trial scholarship is buoyed by the broader Black Lives Matter movement in America starting in 2013. By comparison, the UK's national and, in turn, scholarly conversation about racism and institutional discrimination in the criminal justice system (including police overreach and escalating imprisonment rates) is muted. While this can partly be explained by the UK's smaller overall black population, some criminal justice racial trends are just as alarming as those in America. Indeed, black people in the UK are proportionally (compared to their numbers in the overall population) *more likely* to be in prison than in the US (Lammy, 2017). There is an urgent need to raise awareness about UK criminal justice racial disparities, and to address the complacent and discriminatory views about race in Britain that underpin its lack of scholarly salience. Thus, this project will raise broader periodizing questions, asking what has changed since Stuart Hall and his co-authors published the cultural studies classic *Policing the Crisis* in 1978? Given that antagonism toward police is itself now a repressive-state criterion of being a 'gang nominal' (a designation that has serious consequences for individuals), does a corrosive feedback loop exist between the policing of rap and the anti-police messaging in rap?

Prosecuting Rap will offer a cultural studies contribution to new avenues in interdisciplinary social science scholarship (Williams and Clarke, 2017; Bhatia, Poynting, and Tufail, ed., 2018) that have started attending to the neglected area of race, culture, media and criminal justice. These are informed by high-profile reports not only by Lammy but also by Baroness Young, whose 2014 Review into BAME men in the criminal justice system highlighted the way that powerful racial stereotypes lead young black men to get sucked into criminal investigations when they are not involved in, only on the periphery of, or have since turned their back on crime and anti-social behaviour. In 2018, reports by both a UN rapporteur and Amnesty International drew urgent attention to the potential human rights violations of the UK police's 'Gangs Matrix' database (on which almost 90% are BAME), and a 2018 Information Commission Office investigation has found 'multiple and serious breaches of data protection laws' by such police gang databases. Yet, the legal uses of black youth expressive culture (on gang databases that are used as evidence in courtrooms) remain alarmingly underexplored.

Working with a small group of emergent UK-based scholars, the PI will help address this topical, underexposed area.

### **Research methods**

As the UK's leading defence expert in rap music, the PI has amassed a small personal archive of legal materials: more than a dozen prosecution opening notes; two dozen rap expert reports written by police officers for the prosecution; police Gangs Matrix intelligence statements; judicial decisions; indictments; appeal court transcripts; advice from defence counsel; some 15 PI-authored defence expert reports; and of course a wealth of rap music evidence on which the Crown has sought to rely. Thus, at the heart of the research method will be analysing these materials to produce detailed and original arguments. While the PI is uniquely positioned to access, explain, and evaluate these individual cases, she and the PDRA will also collate and analyse materials on other selected cases (including commissioning the transcribing of a number of judges' summing up statements by MLS Crown), conducting online searches (using legal research databases Court News, Lexis Library, and Westlaw, along with general print media full-text database Factiva [all accessible via the UoM library]). In this way, they will gather legal and press documents of other flagged court cases involving rap (including collating materials on two controversial murder cases in Manchester on which the PI was not instructed). The PI and PDRA will thus be able to cross-reference and broaden out beyond the PI's own personal collection of materials, guarding against the risk of her cases being unrepresentative given her own involvement. The PI and PDRA will conduct interviews with defence lawyers who have contested the use of rap to fully understand what arguments were most effective in court and this will feed into the scholarly articles, expert training sessions, and rap defence handbook.

The PI's well-established expertise in critical textual analysis (with text being understood broadly as written, visual, and audio outputs) is at the methodological centre of both her major monographs to date, and will be key to unpacking the discourses that circulate in and around rap music in criminal proceedings. The PI's scholarship is characterized by a cross-weaving of micro and macro arguments to produce detailed but robustly argued interdisciplinary accounts of the social relations of culture that draw on the fields of cultural studies, black studies, media studies, recent historiography, popular music studies, film studies, race studies, and sociology. Her gangsta rap monograph exemplified this interdisciplinary approach, drawing outwards from individual case studies and textual readings, and is where her interest in the violent themes in, and criminalization of, black music was first developed. The book manuscript she recently completed on race in the US film industry (*A Piece of the Action: Race and Labor in Post-Civil Rights American Cinema*, forthcoming 2019 for Columbia UP) further developed her expertise in the textual reading of visual materials and the relationship between micro and macro, while also exploring the neglected middle or 'meso' level of institutional racial politics. As the PI moves from scholarship on the US to UK context, she will schedule time in the project's early months to conduct secondary literature searches and some immersive secondary reading to ensure that the UK-specific dimensions of this project, including the organizational dimensions of the criminal justice system, are fully explored.

The arts and humanities methods to be developed in this project will complement, but not overlap with, the social science methods of a pending ESRC research grant application (currently second stage; outcome March 2019) in which Quinn is a named co-investigator. The ESRC bid is to continue the work of the large Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) based at University of Manchester. Quinn is a Co-I in the Criminal Justice work package of this bid, and if it is successful she will create a database of court cases involving rap music (with a buy-out of 0.2FTE over five years). This will enable a bird's eye perspective on the Prosecuting Rap phenomenon, collating all the available records on UK trials involving rap music. The aim is to take a quantitative and content-based approach to establish the prevalence and overall courtroom characteristics of this practice. Thus, the methods in the ESRC research project, if successful, will bolster but not cover the same ground as the arguments to be developed in this interdisciplinary arts and humanities project, the latter sitting much closer to the PI's work to date (see CV). Neither project is dependent on the other.

At the heart of the method in this Fellowship will be collating, analysing and evaluating a range of rap texts, courtroom (and print media) primary materials, criminal justice policy reports and selected interviews with lawyers, opening outwards from individual exemplary cases and synthesizing them into coherent and compelling interdisciplinary and impactful arguments for legal professionals, interested publics, scholars and students.

### **Leadership development plan**

The project will enable the PI to drive forward a long-term research agenda that began with the publication of the 2005 monograph *Nuthin' but a G Thang* and continued with the REF2014 impact case study: [Setting a Legal Precedent Through Research into Gangsta Rap](#). This work is showcased by the University of Manchester (UoM) on its central Impact Research webpages [Expert Testimony Leads to Fairer Trials](#) (one of only two impact case studies so featured from UoM's large Faculty of Humanities). UoM has invested in the PI's leadership development with a Strategic Investment Fund grant (c.£8000), enabling the staging of an international workshop on [Prosecuting Rap](#) (2015) at which a network of UK and US lawyers and scholars was first established. The event was filmed, generating c.1,200 YouTube views, and helped establish the PI's intellectual visibility and leadership in this area. With its flagship Social Responsibility agenda (including a research beacon in Global Inequalities), UoM is a natural home for the Prosecuting Rap project: the PI's work meaningfully contributes to forwarding the institution's SR goals. The PI led the programming committee for the international workshop 'The Power of Hip Hop' (London 2016), organized by UoM's In Place of War NGO, and has been supported through school- and faculty-level grants, including the developing of resources and public events at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust at Manchester Central Library (2015-18) and through joining a network grant 'Language Diversity in the Public Sector' (2016-17) based in UoM's large Multilingual Manchester research centre. Most recently, the PI was invited to be a co-investigator on the Sociology-based ESRC centre grant bid for CoDE (as per Research Methods above), further indicating institutional fit in developing the PI's interdisciplinary leadership capabilities.

The PI has also developed Prosecuting Rap networks beyond UoM at a local, national and international level. She served as a Co-I in the UK-wide network 'Marginality and opportunity in contemporary British urban youth culture' (Independent Social Research Foundation-funded), and, in Manchester, there is an emerging network of scholars (based in Sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University) and activists (e.g. Joint Enterprise: Not Guilty by Association) that the PI will collaborate with and platform through this Fellowship. The PI already has excellent US links. As well as being consulted on individual court cases, she co-signed and was cited in an Amicus Brief on rap music for the US Supreme Court case *Taylor Bell v. Itawamba County School Board*; she presented her findings at various institutions including Cornell University; and she has acted as a consultant on the design of the US website ([EndRapOnTrial.com](#)), a one-stop-shop portal of information and advocacy, based at University of California Irvine, on which she features as an expert witness. These international activities set the foundation for the research impact programme for this project (see especially Impact Pathway 3).

So far, despite becoming a UK research leader in this subfield, the PI has had no buy-out to develop her Prosecuting Rap work, and this Fellowship will give her the time to consolidate her leadership and propel her agenda forward. Central to this professional development will be allowing the PI (who has already supervised 7 PhDs to completion) to gain experience in managing the PDRA's career while giving the PDRA the opportunity to develop his/her research trajectory. The PDRA will contribute significantly to research, impact-related and dissemination activities as well as co-authoring two articles with the PI. Through the conference, the co-authoring, the journal special issue, the innovative impact activities, and the filmed interviews, the PI and PDRA will bring together a nascent community of multidisciplinary scholars, lawyers, activists, students and publics.

The PI—together with her PDRA co-author and special issue authors—plans to produce original and important interdisciplinary journal article contributions. With two Ivy League monographs (one in print and one forthcoming 2019) on race and culture and with articles in all the top-tier journals in her

field (see Publication List), the PI will bring scholarly leadership in framing debates and navigating the journal review process (she sits on the editorial advisory board of Cambridge UP's *Journal of American Studies*) to help forward the career trajectories of collaborators and contributors. Her track record means that the suite of scholarly outputs (two articles and a special issue with substantial introduction—see CfS Dissemination below) will likely be published in top interdisciplinary journals in the field and realize transformative scholarly impact in the subfield.

The PI is singularly positioned to pursue this research agenda. Prosecuting Rap is of clear public interest, addressing pressing questions about how black youth culture intersects with racial hierarchies, class inequalities, austerity policies, surveillance policing and new technologies in ways that may have eroded fair trials, curtailed freedom of expression, and fostered racial disproportionality in charging, conviction and sentencing decisions.

### **Project management**

The PI has published extensively on the topic of race, inequality, and culture, has led research projects (Leverhulme Fellowship; University of Manchester Humanities Strategic Investment Fund) and has organized an international conference (see CV). She has already, for more than a decade, been honing the arguments in real-world contexts that she now wants to develop into coordinated scholarly and knowledge-transfer interventions. Though the PI has an excellent track record of scholarly publication, she has co-authored only one prior scholarly output (a book chapter) and has not previously edited a special issue or book. Thus, she has identified co-authoring and editing as professional development training that she will do in the first 6 months of the grant to maximize her concerted move into collaborative research. Moreover, she will assemble an advisory board of non-academic stakeholders and senior academic experts in the field: Bridget Byrne, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, University of Manchester; David Hesmondhalgh, Professor of Media, Music & Culture, University of Leeds; Keir Montieith, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers, London; Charis Kubrin, Professor of Criminology, Law & Society, UC Irvine). All have agreed to join the board if the project is successful and to be in contact with the PI (in person or by Skype/email) every six months over its course. Professor Byrne at Manchester has extensive experience of managing complex budgets and has agreed to be readily available to offer advice on the running of this project grant.

The PI (0.8FTE for 6 months; then 0.6FTE for 12 months) will lead the project and the PDRA (1.0 FTE for the first 12 months), appointed at the appropriate level Grade 6, will have research, writing, engagement, and administrative responsibilities. It is intended that the PDRA will come from a BAME/non-traditional background (see JoR), with potential post-doctoral candidates already identified. These candidates are sociologists of race and culture and will bring their networks and disciplinary expertise to enhance and expand the scope of the project. The plan is for the PDRA to be fully and collaboratively integrated into the project research and outputs (see Workplan and JoR), while also being closely supported. The project will, from the start, establish a reporting system with clear procedures and expectations, and the PDRA will meet with the PI at least once per month (and often much more frequently). Throughout the project, the PI will offer the PDRA guidance on job prospects, career development, and publication strategy after the end of the project, enhanced by the writing of the co-authored journal articles and shared engagement activities. The PDRA will be mentored by the PI and other senior researchers and integrated in the research culture at Manchester. A thorough and integrated system of internal peer reviewing and assessment is in place to guarantee the project's standards and completion, including of planned publications.

### **Dissemination**

Multiple outcomes are planned. The project's central scholarly outputs are two articles and a journal special issue, all published in leading journals. The project's central knowledge exchange, engagement and impact activities are a handbook for defence lawyers; 2 x one-day training/networking events for new rap scholar-expert witnesses; a series of short filmed interviews with stakeholders; blogs and tweets; and one trade press and one broadsheet press articles. Together,

this ambitious yet manageable dissemination strategy will ensure that the project has both a lasting pragmatic legacy in court cases and public debate and a long-term scholarly value contributing to knowledge about race, class, youth, culture, neoliberalism and criminal justice.

**SCHOLARLY OUTPUTS:**

1. **PI to edit a special issue on ‘Policing and Prosecuting UK Rap’ for *Popular Music*** (journal co-editor Professor John Street, who presented at the 2015 Prosecuting Rap workshop, has expressed interest). This will draw from strong contributions at the planned international conference (see 7. below), with an emphasis on including emerging scholars, as well as soliciting new work from others.
2. **PI to write substantial framing introduction (4,000 words) for the special issue above**, staking out the conceptual terms of the subfield for a wider scholarly readership. It will introduce the various discursive frames imposed on rap by prosecutors in UK court cases, focusing on the Crown’s insistence on criminological readings of lyrics and videos. It will go on to set out how this can be complicated, foregrounding the importance of cultural studies approaches, as generated by this project. The introduction will also draw outwards to establish the wider social salience of the Prosecuting Rap phenomenon in terms of capabilities, racism, inequality and the neoliberal state.
3. **PI and PDRA to co-author article: ‘The Meta-Policing of Rap: The criminalization of anti-police black youth expressive culture.’** Drawing on specific cases, including the trial for the murder of a police officer in which a rap verse was heavily relied on (on which the PI worked and which ended in acquittal), this article will examine the relationship between UK rap music and the police since the 2000s. This includes the role of police officers as rap expert witnesses for the prosecution, asking whether vicious cycles emerge when the state criminalizes anti-police black expressive culture and then asks police officers themselves to act as the prosecution expert witnesses of rap music in cases. Target journal: *Race & Class*.
4. **PI and PDRA co-author article: ‘Un-Common Purpose: Racial bias and the legal uses of rap music in joint enterprise cases.’** Drawing on two murder cases in South Manchester (in which the PI was not instructed) and a conspiracy case in Bedford (in which the PI testified), this article will assess rap music’s evidentiary role in attempts to secure group convictions of BAME youngsters using the controversial joint enterprise doctrine and gang databases. It will include a consideration of press coverage of these legal cases. Target journal: *Race and Ethnicity Studies*.

**KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT OUTPUTS:**

5. **A handbook (authored by the PI) for defence lawyers and expert witnesses** (see Pathways to Impact 1). Launch of handbook event supported by Project Partner the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust at Manchester Central Library, which will host and publicize the launch. Handbook release supported by publication of a substantial **trade press article (target *Barrister* magazine)**.
6. **2 x one-day training events for new (and existing?) rap scholar defence experts**, spread over the course of the project (see Pathways to Impact 2).
7. **A one-day international conference featuring scholars, lawyers, and activists (JENGBA)**. To be recorded and (subject to consents) available open access to view, with links from a UoM Global Inequalities beacon webpage (see DMP).
8. **A series of 5 short filmed interviews (by the PI and PDRA) with different stakeholders**, available to view open access (subject to consents) with links from a UoM’s beacon webpage.
9. Press releases and blogs to provoke media discussion, **and one broadsheet (target *Guardian*) op-ed press article**.
10. Numerous academic lectures and events, including a panel at the Media, Communication, and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) conference in January 2021.

## Dr Eithne Quinn

### Current post and key role

Senior Lecturer (since 2013) in American Studies, School of Arts, Languages, Cultures, University of Manchester (UoM); Lecturer in American Studies, UoM (2003–13)  
Head of American Studies, 2010–13, 2016–

**Previous posts** Lecturer in Film Studies, University of Nottingham (2002–03)  
Lecturer in Cultural Studies, University of Central Lancashire (2000–02)

### Qualifications

2000 Ph.D American Studies, *The Politics and Poetics of Gangsta Rap*, Keele Uni.  
1993 B.A. Hons (First) in American Studies, UoM

### Selected Research Grants

2016/17 Crossing Borders: Marginality and opportunity in contemporary British urban youth culture. Co-I. Independent Social Research Foundation £3,740  
2017 Hip-hop Education. PI. Internationalisation grant, UoM £2,350  
2015/16 Prosecuting Rap. PI. Humanities strategic investment fund, UoM £8,100  
2015 Multilingualism and Language Provision in Public Services. Co-I. Network grant, UoM £4,680  
2007 Blaxploitation Film Culture. PI. Leverhulme research fellowship, £16,830  
2002 Culture and Commerce of Gangsta Rap. PI. AHRC small grant, £1,850  
2001 Culture and Commerce of Gangsta Rap. PI. AHRC small grant, £2,620

### Knowledge Exchange and Legal Impacts

*Impact Case Study 2014 REF*: Eithne Quinn, [Setting a legal precedent through research into gangsta rap](#); UoM Research Impact webpage:

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/impact/case-studies/expert-testimony/>

*Instructed as rap music expert in crown and county court cases:*

- R v J., 2018, VHS Fletchers, Nottingham / 7 Bedford Row, London
- R v U. and Ors, 2018, Hollingsworth Edwards Solicitors, London
- R v O., 2018, Tosswill & Co Solicitors, London
- R v D.; R v Z., 2018, Noble Solicitors, Northampton
- R v G., 2018, Saracens Law, Luton / 187 Fleet Street Chambers, London
- R v P., 2017, LLM Solicitors, London / 15 New Bridge St. Chambers, London
- R v F.-B., 2017, Morgan Has Solicitors, London / Garden Court Chambers, London
- R. v J. 2014, Lewis Nedas Law, London / 25 Bedford Row Chambers, London
- Haringey Council v F., 2013, John Ford Solicitors, London
- R v B., 2010, Lloyds PR Solicitors, London / Garden Court Chambers, London
- R v C., 2008, Kaim Todner Solicitors, 2008, London / Garden Court Chambers, London
- R v P., 2008, Needham Poulter Solicitors, London

*Selected consultancy work*: R v N. (2018), Bark & Co. Solicitors, London; R v C. (2018), Potter Derby Solicitors, St Helens; R v H (2011), Kaim Todner Solicitors, London; R v M. (2009), LLM Solicitors, London

### Selected Invited Presentations

2018 invited speaker, 'Occupy Wall Street and New York Hip Hop Culture', *Centre for American Studies Open Lecture Series*, University of Kent, 7 Feb. 2018  
2018 invited speaker, 'Rap Music and Criminal Justice', *Festival of Resisting Borders and Prisons*, Power House, Manchester, 19 May 2018  
2017 invited speaker, 'Prosecuting Rap: The Legal Use of Rap Music in Court Cases', African American Studies, Cornell University, US, 10 May 2017  
2017 convenor and speaker, *Hip Hop, Spoken Word and the Library*, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Centre, Manchester Central Library, 14 Nov. 2017

- 2017 invited speaker, 'A Piece of the Action: Race and Labor in Post-Civil Rights American Cinema', *Culture, Communication and Media* seminar, University of Salford, 22 Mar. 2017
- 2016 invited speaker closing plenary panel, *International Hip Hop Studies Conference*, U Cambridge, 22-24 Jun. 2016
- 2015 invited speaker, 'A Piece of the Action: Minority Participation and Diversity Policies in Contemporary Hollywood', *Political Screen*, University College, London, 19-20 Jun. 2015
- 2014 invited speaker, 'Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change: The Case of Rap', *Sound Affects* workshop, UEA, 14-15 Apr. 2014
- 2013, invited speaker, 'Racial Politics in Post-Civil Rights Act Hollywood', *Visual Culture* roundtable, American Studies, U. Nottingham, 8 Dec. 2013
- 2013 invited speaker, 'In the Heat of the Night and Racial Politics in Post-Civil Rights Act Hollywood', *Andrew Hook Centre*, University of Glasgow, 13 Feb. 2013
- 2012 invited speaker, 'Occupy Wall Street and New York's Hip Hop Moguls', *Comparative History of Political Engagement*, Leverhulme Network, Le Mans, France, 12 Sep. 2012
- 2009 invitation, *Chester Himes: A Centennial Symposium*, Penn. State U., US, 2 Mar. 2009
- 2007, invited speaker, 'Hip-hop and Education', *Public Diplomacy* event series, US Embassy London, 3 Oct. 2007
- 2006, invited speaker, 'Hip-hop Scholars Meet Hip-hop Media' roundtable, *Hip Hop Archive* launch, Stanford University, US, 4 Mar. 2006
- 2004, invited speaker, 'Black Popular Culture' highlighted panel, *American Sociological Association*, San Francisco, US, 14-17 Aug. 2004

### **Recent conference and event organizing**

- 2017 convenor, *Hip Hop, Spoken Word and the Library*, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre, Manchester Central Library, half-day event, 14 Nov. 2017
- 2016 programmer, *The Power of Hip Hop: Exchange*, In Place of War, Rich Mix, London, international workshop, 8 Jul. 2016
- 2015 convenor, *Prosecuting Rap*, 2-day international workshop, University of Manchester, 14-15 Oct. 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKAe6HBrHm0>

### **Editorial and reviewer roles**

- Since 2016 Editorial Advisory Board, *Journal of American Studies* (Cambridge UP)
- 1998–2003 Editorial Advisory Board and a General Editor (2002–03), *Scope: An On-line Journal of Film Studies*
- Book and book series proposals reviewed for Oxford University Press, Routledge, Manchester University Press, Columbia University Press, University of Wisconsin Press
- Evaluator of research grants for the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (2012) and the Economic and Social Research Council (2006)
- Refereed submissions for *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Journal of American Studies*, *Journal of American History*, *Cinema Journal*, *Popular Music*, *Symbolic Interaction*, *Journal for Cultural Research*, *European Journal of American Culture*

### **Supervision and examining:**

- Supervised 7 PhDs to completion; currently lead supervisor of 2 PhD students
- External examined 6 PhD theses (English Lit., UCL; American Studies, Hull; English Lit., King's College; Sociology, Cambridge; English Lit., Sydney; Film Studies, UEA)
- 2018– External Examiner, MA American Studies, Uni. of Nottingham

### **Selected media reviews, appearances and consultation**

*Nuthin' but a 'G' Thang* monograph interview on *Thinking Allowed* with Laurie Taylor, BBC R4 (2005) (Pick of the Week in *The Guardian*; Pick of the Day in *The Independent*, *Radio Times*, *Time Out London*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*); and reviewed in *Financial Times* (3/3/07). Court testimony quoted in *Daily Mail* 01/08/08; and *South London Reporter*, 31/07/08. Consultant and interviewee, UK gangs series, *Today* programme, BBC R4 (2012); Ciara Leeming, 'Rap Lyrics Used in Trials,' *Big Issue in the North*, 2-8 Nov. 2015; and on Radio 5 Live interview (2015).

## Books

Quinn, E, forthcoming 2019, *A Piece of the Action: Race and Labor in Post-Civil Rights American Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press; in-press, publication date Nov. 2019)

Quinn, E, *Nuthin' but a 'G' Thang: The Culture and Commerce of Gangsta Rap* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), xiii, 251 pp.

## Articles in Refereed Journals

Quinn, E, 'Occupy Wall Street, Racial Neoliberalism, and New York's Hip-Hop Moguls', *American Quarterly* 68.1 (2016), 75-101

Quinn, E, 'Black Talent and Conglomerate Hollywood: The Case of Will Smith and Tyler Perry', *Popular Communication* 11, no. 2 (2014), 196–210. Top 5 Most Read: 3,515 views

Quinn, E, 'Closing Doors: Hollywood, Affirmative Action, and the Revitalization of Conservative Racial Politics', *Journal of American History* 99, no. 2 (2012), 466–91. Runner up Arthur Miller Essay Prize, British Association for American Studies, 2013

Quinn, E, 'From Oppositional Readers to Positional Producers: The Making of Black Female Heroism in *Coffy*', *Screen* 53, no. 3 (2012), 266–86

Quinn, E, 'Sincere Fictions: The Production Cultures of Whiteness in Late 1960s Hollywood', *Velvet Light Trap* 67 (2011), 3–13

Quinn, E, "'Tryin' To Get Over": *Super Fly*, Black Politics, and Post-Civil Rights Film Enterprise', *Cinema Journal* 49, no. 2 (2010), 86–105

Quinn, E, 'Black British Cultural Studies and the Rap on Gangsta', *Black Music Research Journal* 20.2 (2002): 195–216

Quinn, E, "'Who's the Mack?" The Performativity and Politics of the Pimp Figure in Gangsta Rap', *Journal of American Studies* 34.1 (2000): 115–32

## Chapters in Books

Quinn, E, and P Krämer, 'Blaxploitation Cinema', *Contemporary American Cinema*, eds Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006), 184–198

Quinn, E, "'It's a Doggy-Dogg World": Black Cultural Politics, Gangsta Rap, and the Post-Soul Man', *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*, eds Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 187–214

Quinn, E, "'Pimpin' Ain't Easy": Work, Leisure and "Lifestylization" of the Pimp Figure in Early 1970s Black America', *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*, ed. Brian Ward (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 211–232

## Blogs

Quinn, E, 2018, 'Lost in Translation: Rap Music and Racial Bias in the Courtroom' <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2018/10/lost-in-translation-rap-music-and-racial-bias-in-the-courtroom/>

Quinn, E, 2016, 'Hollywood So White' <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/ethnicity/2016/02/hollywood-so-white/>

Quinn, E, 2014, 'Prosecuting Rap' <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/featured/2014/07/taking-the-rap/>



20 December 2018

**RE: Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture**

To Whom It May Concern,

We are pleased to be a project partner for Dr Eithne Quinn's project 'Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture' by promoting and hosting the launch of the rap handbook as part of an international conference in 2020.

The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre was established in 1998. It was named in memory of Ahmed Iqbal Ullah, who was only 13 when he was murdered by a fellow pupil at a Manchester high school in 1986. The Centre is a leading specialist library on race, ethnicity and migration, with a rich collection focusing on the British and American experiences of BAME peoples. A founding principle for the Centre was to be open-access; to serve the regional community of university academics and students and also be available to the general public. A second major objective was for the Centre to take a leading role in collecting archival materials relating to Manchester BAME communities. The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust was created in 2001, and is registered with the Charity Commission. It is the outreach arm of the Centre, leading on school and community engagement and heritage projects with local BAME communities.

Prosecuting Rap proposes to be an exceptional and critically important project, drawing on Dr Quinn's considerable expertise as a rap defense expert in trials. One of its strengths will be its interdisciplinary, integrated approach to the use of UK rap music as evidence in criminal proceedings. It will ensure that the rap handbook, to support defense counsels contesting the legal use of rap evidence, will also be a valuable resource to students, academics and communities beyond the courtroom.

The AIURRRC has previously collaborated with Dr Quinn on collection development and public events, most notably the Hip Hop Collection project. This consisted of targeted acquisitions of books and magazines and the development of a study guide to support Dr Quinn's Hip Hop Studies students and our wider audiences. Hip Hop

lesson plans, developed by Dr Quinn's students, are also used as an educational tool by our Student Ambassadors in inspirational sessions delivered to Manchester school pupils. The project was celebrated with an event that saw speakers working in the field of Hip Hop and spoken word (in both an academic and community context), sharing the positive impact of Hip Hop culture with an engaged audience.

The Hip Hop Collection project was funded by the University of Manchester's Social Responsibility in the Curriculum Fund, which allows academics to develop learning opportunities for their students that go beyond the lecture theatre. We are keen to continue working in this collaborative way, supporting the dissemination of academic research to wider audiences to achieve social impact. Becoming a partner with Prosecuting Rap will allow us to build on our shared goal of delivering anti-racist initiatives, research and resources.

We are happy to support this project with in kind support to the value of £800. This includes providing the performance space suite in Central Library for the launch of the rap handbook and reception (est. £600). We will also provide two days of staff time to produce a publicity flyer for the launch event, which we will promote online via our websites and social media channels (est. £200).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Briggs".

Laura Briggs  
Library Manager

## IMPACT CONTEXT

The PI's prosecuting rap work has already been impactful, featuring as an Impact Case Study in the REF2014 (see CfS Leadership Development Plan) and, since 2014, Quinn has continued to act as a defence expert. This includes writing reports and/or attending court in five cases in the last 12 months (three murder trials, one with six defendants; and two complex conspiracy cases with a combined total of 16 defendants all facing long prison terms). Twenty-four out of the 25 defendants in these five cases were BAME young people, and three of the five cases ended in hung jury or acquittal for some defendants. These cases are complex and acting as an expert can prove time-consuming. Quinn has had to turn down more cases and has struggled to refer on cases in this niche area, suggesting that demand is outstripping supply regarding defence experts. Moreover, in the majority of cases involving rap music, defence counsels do not even seek out expert help and the rap music goes in uncontested. As a criminal defence barrister recently explained: 'rap lyrics are frequently sought to be adduced by the prosecution in criminal trials, including and especially murder trials, and defence counsel might not be aware that this is an area in which expert evidence can properly be called.'

## IMPACT PATHWAYS

So far the PI's research impact has been distinctive but mainly reactive: coming up with research-led arguments that scrutinize the validity of rap lyrics and videos in individual cases. The impact strategy going forward is fourfold: 1) to raise awareness among defence lawyers that rap expert witnesses can and should be called and to communicate effective arguments to lawyers in digestible form; 2) to train and develop a network of new defence scholar-experts to meet the spiking demand; 3) to amplify the impact of 1 and 2 above through US collaboration; and 4), more structurally, to join with advocacy groups to communicate with policymakers and publics about the risks associated with rap and challenge how it is being used as a tool to police and punish BAME youth.

**1. Creating a rap evidence handbook for defence lawyers** The project will produce an c.8-page handbook for UK defence lawyers who are confronting rap lyrics and videos (with which they are rarely conversant) in criminal proceedings. The handbook will address recurring concerns across UK cases, organized into four sections: 1) the various incriminating legal uses of rap (incl. confession, association, intent, and bad character); 2) motivations for making the rap lyrics/videos and rap genre definitions, including well-known comparative examples by rap stars that can help take the sting out of violent rap evidence; 3) how to approach interpreting the lyrics/videos; and 4) wider research sources and arguments that question the admissibility of such cultural evidence. The handbook will be available as a PDF and posted online (see DMP). Quinn has worked with a number of London-based criminal defence lawyers who have contested rap evidence and they will help ensure the handbook gets used. Barristers' chambers tend to be larger and more networked than solicitors' firms, and it is barristers who will mainly spread word to one another about the handbook. The PI has been instructed by London barristers from Garden Court Chambers in three cases; 25 Bedford Row Chambers in two cases; 7 Bedford Row Chambers; 15 New Bridge Street Chambers; LLM Barristers; and 187 Fleet Street Chambers. The PI will also author a piece for one of the two leading trade publications, *The Barrister* magazine (which has already solicited a 2,000-word article contribution from her), to which all chambers subscribe, further ensuring the handbook's visibility.

**2. Developing a network of rap scholar-experts** The Metropolitan Police has formed what it calls a 'Drill Music Translation Cadre': a collection of police officers who routinely write reports and testify for the prosecution in cases involving rap. The existence of the Cadre indicates the striking asymmetry of expertise between prosecution and defence. Defence experts are currently in short supply, so that, even when defence lawyers want to contest the prosecution's use of rap, they struggle to find someone to instruct. With Impact Pathway 1 (above) stimulating further demand for rap experts, there is a need for more scholars who are primed and willing to take on this work. The PI will hold two networking and training workshops over the course of the project for scholars of black youth culture interested in becoming (and identify any who have already acted as) expert witnesses. The first workshop will feature the US's leading arts and humanities rap scholar-expert and communicator, Erik Nielson (Associate Professor of Liberal Arts, U Richmond). Nielson and Quinn will impart tried and tested strategies and recurring arguments, focusing on how scholar-experts can

find their voice and contribute to legal arguments. Expert report materials will be shared, accessible arguments discussed, the practice of taking the stand demystified and a working draft of the handbook circulated. The second follow-up workshop will be collaborative, allowing the project's new UK experts to share good practice, seek advice and consolidate a sustainable network. With the new experts providing feedback on a draft of the handbook from the perspective of the user, this impact strategy will maximize mutual exchange of knowledge and practice. By fostering a 'cadre' of defence scholar-experts who will scrutinize rap's legal use in criminal proceedings, helping ensure fair trials for resource-poor and stigmatized young people, this project will scale up its legal impacts.

**3. International impact amplification (of pathways 1 & 2)** Although a comparative scholarly analysis of UK and US prosecuting rap trends is beyond this project's scope, it nevertheless develops international significance through its impact agenda. The PI is the only UK scholar who is fully networked with the leading Rap On Trial scholar-experts in America (along with Dr Nielson above, these are Andrea Dennis, Professor of Law, U Georgia and Charis Kubrin, Professor of Criminology, Law & Society, UC Irvine). All three presented at the 2015 Prosecuting Rap workshop in Manchester. These US scholars have already worked with the PI to develop impact pathways in the UK and US (see CfS Leadership Development Plans). This project will now build on this established international collaboration, particularly in terms of training (Nielson's KE role in 2. above) and of handbook activities. In tandem with the development of the UK rap handbook for this project, Charis Kubrin and her colleague Jack Lerner (Professor of Law, UC Irvine) and his team at the UCI Law School's Intellectual Property, Arts & Technology Clinic are in the planning stage of producing a large-scale manual for defence lawyers in US rap-on-trial cases. They have asked Quinn to be an arts and humanities advisor for the project, as well as a provider of content in the form of legal briefs from her UK cases. A preliminary Skype meeting has already taken place and what emerged was the PI's role in feeding important cultural studies arguments, to be developed in her project, into their law/criminology-based manual plans. These prominent US social scientists will be excellent *international impact brokers* for the research generated by this Fellowship. Supplying arguments and evidence to these intermediaries, who are best-placed to disseminate it internationally through their manual, will help ensure the maximization of this project's research impact, reaching stakeholders in the US where rap-on-trial is even more pervasive.

**4. Communicating with UK policymakers, media, and the public for deeper change** The project will communicate with and influence UK policy-makers and raise public awareness about potential criminal justice over-reach in the use of rap music evidence. Journalists have already started to show interest in the use of rap music in court cases, which raises arresting questions about freedom of expression, racism, human rights, inequality, black youth culture, legal aid cuts, and access to fair trials. By composing a press release, with the assistance of University of Manchester's press office, to coincide with the first training event and holding a launch event for the handbook (hosted by project partner the AIUET at Manchester Central Library), the PI, PDRA and wider network will communicate with policymakers and media. Advocacy groups like JENGBA, Stopwatch (Research and Action on Fair and Accountable Policing), and Human Rights Watch will be contacted about the launch, along with the likes of David Lammy's office, Lucy Powell MP, and Andrew Mitchell MP, who have all spoken out about racial bias in the use of the controversial joint enterprise doctrine (currently under parliamentary review). The project will work with advocacy groups on individual highly contested convictions and assist in the building of appeal cases. This project will inform and reframe how journalists discuss this topic by feeding into news features, blogging (see List of Publications for track record) and the writing of an op-ed piece (target: *Guardian*). At the same time, through a series of short filmed interviews linked and publicized through the UoM beacon webpage, the project will showcase different stakeholders (indicative selection: a rapper whose music has been criminalized; a JENGBA mother-activist of someone whose conviction relied on rap evidence; a criminal defence barrister; a civil defence solicitor; and a scholar-expert witness).

## Quinn\_WorkPlan

### **Months 1-6 (PI 0.8FTE; PDRA 1.0FTE): RESEARCH & TRAINING**

*Leadership activities:* PI and PDRA to deliver the first expert witness training workshop. This event will be front-loaded (Month 5) because there is a pressing need to build some capacity. Write first-draft handbook for circulation at training event; press release for event; co-written op-ed article and blog.

*Research activities:* PI and PDRA to do primary data collection and note-taking (court materials from PI's collection; targeted cases from online legal databases and transcripts; criminal justice policy reports; press article databases; interviews with lawyers/other stakeholders; scholarly lit. searches); co-plan journal Articles 1 and 2; PI's US research/impact trip; conference planning.

### **Months 7-12 (PI 0.6FTE; PDRA 1.0FTE): KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

*Leadership activities:* Complete and publish the handbook for defence lawyers and hold launch event (Month 9); make and release five short interview films; publish trade press article. *Research Activities:* Hold conference (Month 9); co-write journal Articles 1 and 2; disseminate findings through conference and seminar papers; finalize the contributors for the Journal Special Issue of *Popular Music*.

### **Months 12-18 (PI 0.6FTE) CONSOLIDATING NETWORK AND FINDINGS**

*Leadership activities:* PI to organize second collaborative expert witness training event (Month 14); make updates to manual; continue to build network and exchange knowledge with non-academic beneficiaries.

*Research Activities:* PI to write Introduction for the journal Special Issue and review and edit all the contributions, completing the issue in Month 18; continue to disseminate scholarly findings.

Note: Milestones in **bold**.

Month	Research	Impact and Leadership	PI
1&2	Primary research: review PI's collection of materials. Lit. searches; conference CFP	Planning for training event 1 and handbook	0.8
3	Primary research: online legal databases and reports; set interviews; PI trip to US.	Planning for training event 1 and handbook; publish blog (PI & PDRA)	0.8
4	Primary research: research interviews with lawyers and stakeholders (PI & PDRA).	<b>First draft of handbook</b> ; planning for training event 1	0.8
5	PI & PDRA plan Article 1	<b>Hold training event 1</b>	0.8
6	PI & PDRA write Article 1	<b>PI &amp; PDRA write op-ed press article</b>	0.8
7	<b>PI &amp; PDRA complete Article 1</b> ; conf. preparation	PDRA engagement work; <b>PI writes trade-press piece</b>	0.6
8	PI & PDRA research Article 2; conf. prep	Finalize handbook	0.6
9	<b>Conference in Manchester</b>	<b>Publish handbook with launch event</b> at conference	0.6
10	PI & PDRA write Article 2; PDRA contacts journal Special Issue contributors	Plan filmed interviews	0.6
11	PI & PDRA write Article 2; RA works on Journal Special Issue	<b>Film five interviews</b> and start publishing them (PDRA & PI)	0.6
12	<b>PI &amp; PDRA complete Article 2</b> ; Deadline for Special Issue submissions	Post remaining filmed interviews (PDRA & PI); Plan training event 2	0.6
13&14	PI plans Special Issue	<b>PI holds training event 2</b> ; update handbook; MeCCSA panel	0.6
15	PI writes Special Issue intro 4000 words		0.6
16&17	PI Special Issue editing		0.6
18	<b>PI completes Special Issue</b>		0.6



**COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal data provided on this form will be processed by AHRC, and may be held on computerised database and/or manual files. Further details may be found in the **guidance notes**

# Leadership Fellows Peer Review

AHRC Reference: AH/T000058/1

Document Status: With Council

## Leadership Fellows (Open Call)

### Applicant Details

Applicant	Dr Eithne Quinn	Organisation	The University of Manchester
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### Title of Research Project

Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture
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### Review Information

Response Due Date	20/03/2019	Reviewer Reference:	050819198
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### Research Council Contact Details

AHRC Administration Contact:	Email:	Telephone:
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### Quality

*Please comment on the quality and importance of the work proposed, considering: (1) Aims and Objectives; (2) Research Questions; (3) Research Context; (4) Research Method. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.*

1. This proposal sets out a number of very well-crafted objectives and offers a compelling statement about the broader research and political contexts. 2. There are seven research questions which are clearly set out and which are realistically achievable within the time-frame of the project. 3. The research questions clearly emerge from a secure grasp of the scholarly, legal and policy contexts for the research both in the UK (main research site) and the US, where there has been some limited scholarship in the area of 'rap-on-trial'. 4. Research Methods: The PI is the UK's leading defence expert in rap music and is already well-versed the methods required for such a project. However, I do have some concerns about the relationship of the PI to the materials to be used for the project, both in terms of researcher reflexivity and research ethics. In the Case for Support, the PI states she will use personal materials which arose out of her involvement as a rap defence expert in a number of criminal cases in recent years, which has meant that she has developed a 'small personal archive of legal materials' (such as prosecution opening notes, rap expert reports, police intelligence statements, appeal court transcripts, advice from defence counsel) which will be used in the current project. This strikes me as a potentially problematic stance, given that it is not clear from the application that the PI had gained prior ethical clearance to exploit such materials arising out of her involvement in court cases for the purposes of future research. Whilst the Case for Support does point out that the PI and PDRA will amass other materials for the project, it would have been appropriate for the PI to comment on the ethical aspects of using material obtained from work carried out under very different conditions to the proposed Leadership project.

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Overall, the quality and importance of the work proposed is

Outstanding	✓ Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactor y
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

High	✓ Medium	Low
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### Proposed Leadership Activities

Please comment on: a) the leadership activities which will be undertaken during the project and the degree to which they are collaborative; b) the appropriateness of the leadership activities to the proposed research and the integration of the leadership activities with the project; c) the extent to which these activities will develop or further enhance the PI's capacity for research leadership. All of the activities described should be commensurate with the PI's career stage.

a) The leadership activities are entirely appropriate and will lead to an impactful and lasting legacy for the research into potential race and class bias regarding black expressive culture in the legal system. The activities are collaborative and the PDRA will be involved in the research, scholarly publications (as co-author) and dissemination of outputs. (b) The leadership fellow will also be collaborating with a committed project partner, the legal profession and US scholars notably. The range of scholarly and knowledge exchange/policy outputs complement each other and are wholly appropriate. (There are 10 outputs in total). In fact they are ground-breaking in many respects. The plans to make available a rap handbook to the legal (defence) profession and to develop a network of rap defence experts for future criminal proceedings is very significant and unusual for an arts and humanities project. (c) The fact that the PI will be involved in a range of academic, legal and policy networks throughout this project both nationally and internationally, and crucially, will be involved in training of legal practitioners and future rap defence experts will, without doubt, allow her to develop as a future research leader who will be able to demonstrate the relevance of cultural studies/humanistic scholarship to policy processes and enhancement of those processes.

Overall, the proposed leadership activities are

✓ Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactor y
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

High	✓ Medium	Low
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### People

Please comment on the people involved in this proposal, including the Fellow's ability or potential to provide intellectual leadership within their discipline and beyond. Refer to any scheme guidance available under "Help". You should comment on the training and development opportunities available for research staff on the project. This includes those in relation to research expertise, as well as wider development, e.g. in connection with activities proposed in the Pathways to Impact statement.

The PI is the UK's leading expert on the use of rap as prejudicial evidence in court proceedings and is uniquely positioned to bring a cultural studies perspective to this area of research. The PI already has many links with both scholars, legal practitioners and activists and her work has been covered in the national print and broadcast media. She also has a track record of excellent publications, which suggest that she has an outstanding ability to provide intellectual leadership in their discipline of American Studies and beyond to include cultural studies, cultural sociology, critical criminology and critical race studies. The PI has an excellent record of external grant capture, including a Leverhulme Fellowship, which suggests that this is clearly a future research leader in the field. The career development opportunities for the PDRA are well thought-through and include academic outputs, as well as crucial public engagement training via workshops and media

exposure (e.g an op-ed piece).

Overall, the applicant's/applicants' work to date and ability to bring the project to completion are

✓ Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

High	✓ Medium	Low
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## Management

Please comment on the proposed management of the work outlined in the proposal, considering: (1) Feasibility of the project and its likelihood of completion within the proposed timescales; (2) Appropriateness of the project plan, including arrangements for reviewing progress; (3) The level of support from the host organisation; (4) Whether the Data Management Plan is appropriate, feasible and valid for the project. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.

1. This is an ambitious project, both in terms of its scholarly and policy-related outputs but given that this project builds on significant expertise built up over a sustained period of time, I would be confident that the project will be able to deliver on its promised outputs. 2. The Project workplan is clear and realistic, given the PI's track-record of achievement and already-existing scholarly and practitioner networks. 3. The PI has full support from her home HEI, who selected her to be one of the Leadership fellows and have been facilitating her development as a research leader for some time before this application was made. The Head of School statement was compelling in this respect and clearly the institution plans to further invest in the PI's development in future years, well beyond the lifetime of any Leadership award. 4. The Data management plan seems reasonable and well-researched. However, I would have expected to see something more specifically relating to the use of sensitive material, especially materials from the PI's 'personal archive' of materials gathered from previous involvement as defence expert in a number of criminal cases (see my comments regarding the ethical aspects of this under 'Quality').

Overall, the proposed management of the project is

Outstanding	✓ Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

High	✓ Medium	Low
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## Value for Money

Please comment on the value for money and appropriateness of resources requested in this proposal. You should ensure that you refer to any scheme-specific guidance available under 'Help'

The Justification of Resources document is detailed and seems to me to be entirely reasonable. The PI has given consideration to ways in which the budget could be limited without impacting on the viability of the project deliverables (e.g. clustering meetings and travel; using the Global Inequalities UoM website, making use of in-kind support from the Project Partner). Given the potential reach and societal impact of such a project, this proposal presents very good value for money.

Overall, the value for money of the project is

✓ Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

High	✓ Medium	Low
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## Outputs, Dissemination and Impact

*Please comment on the proposed dissemination strategy and Pathways to Impact, including the extent to which the programme of work will result in high quality public output(s), and whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries might be and appropriate ways to engage with them throughout the project.*

The project has 10 proposed outputs, 4 of which are scholarly, 6 of which are related to knowledge exchange and policy/legal frameworks. The academic outputs are very high quality - e.g. articles in top-tier journals and the non-academic outputs will have significant reach (e.g. the magazine article in Barrister trade magazine), the handbook for defence lawyers and the development of a viable networks of defence experts. This aspect of the project is the strongest - which is no mean feat for an Arts and Humanities project. The PI is clearly very experienced in this domain and has an impressive proven track record of public engagement and involvement in legal proceedings as an expert. For example, her previous research in this area was selected as a REF2014 Impact Case Study. The Case for Support and Justification for Resources also make the point that the impact which will be carried out towards the start of the project will feed into the scholarly outputs of the project, demonstrating that the PI adopts a holistic approach to impact rather than seeing it as something which emerges only at the end - the entire project is itself defined around its potential impact in an area of urgent socio-political significance. The project impacts are also relevant to the US context and the PI's already-existing scholarly network in this field make this a credible proposition.

*Overall the proposed outputs and dissemination strategy are*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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*Overall, Pathways to Impact, including identification of potential beneficiaries, is*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	Medium	Low
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## Overall Assessment

### Your Conclusions

*Please give your overall conclusions on this proposal, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring that you have taken the quality of both the research project and the leadership development plans into consideration. You should ensure that you refer to 'Help' for any scheme-specific guidance.*

A well-designed and compelling research project to be carried out by a very credible PI, who has a track record of impactful research which demonstrates the urgent relevance of humanities scholarship to legal and policy issues facing the UK in the intersecting areas of race, class and black expressive youth culture. The PI is fully supported by her HEI and plans to offer excellent career development opportunities to the PDRA. The project has plans for an Advisory Board, some of whom the PI has already worked with. If the PI is able to clarify the ethical position on her 'personal archive' of materials (see my comments in the 'Quality' section) via response to the panel, I would hope that this project could receive funding.

*Please assign the proposal an overall grade, ensuring that you refer to the guidance under 'Help' for grade descriptions and any scheme-specific*

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

guidance.

6 (High)	✓ 5	4	3	2	1 (Low)
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✓ High	Medium	Low
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# Leadership Fellows Peer Review

AHRC Reference: AH/T000058/1

Document Status: With Council

## Leadership Fellows (Open Call)

### Applicant Details

Applicant	Dr Eithne Quinn	Organisation	The University of Manchester
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### Title of Research Project

Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture
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### Review Information

Response Due Date	19/02/2019	Reviewer Reference:	122244457
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### Research Council Contact Details

AHRC Administration Contact:	Email:	Telephone:
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### Quality

*Please comment on the quality and importance of the work proposed, considering: (1) Aims and Objectives; (2) Research Questions; (3) Research Context; (4) Research Method. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.*

The Aims and Objectives are clearly stated and the issue of the treatment of young black men within the English and Welsh Justice system is a vital one. This is a timely and highly worthwhile project.

The research questions are clearly articulated and highly important.

The research context is clearly laid out. However, it is not clear how widespread the phenomenon being described is. Further details of relevant cases would have been useful. It would also be good to know how many cases are going to be examined here.

I am puzzled by the lack of reference to Lily E. Hirsch's work on the use of music in the US legal system as this has dealt with the use of rap lyrics in trials.

It would have been good to have included a bibliography as without one, a reviewer has to second guess what is being referred to (for example on the CfS page 3). It would have been useful to know what 'the extant popular music scholarship on UK rap' consists of and which authors are being referred to here. Similarly it would be useful to have examples of where 'overtly literal and criminological reading of rap (have been).... reproduced in much of the social science scholarship' (page 2). Examples of the 'growing number of critical criminologists' who are interested in how rap is being used in court cases

(page 4) would also be useful. It seems that a number of generalisations are being made, but the evidence to back them up is not always cited..

The research methods are straight forward and seem set to achieve the aims of the project, although it might have also have been useful to talk to prosecutors and to the police as this would have provided a more rounded picture. As it is, there is a danger of this being somewhat one sided and overly concerned with the defence. It is not axiomatic that the defence should be prioritised and it would be useful to interact more with prosecution lawyers in order to get a more rounded picture. While it is admitted that rap videos can incite, this seems to be quickly passed over. A potnetial for possible bias is exacerbated by the fact that many of the documents to be drawn on are the applicant's own.

The concentration on the print media needs to be justified.

I am puzzled by the reference to "the police force' (Cfs 2) when there are many in England and Wales.

*Overall, the quality and importance of the work proposed is*

	✓			
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactor y

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### **Proposed Leadership Activities**

*Please comment on: a) the leadership activities which will be undertaken during the project and the degree to which they are collaborative; b) the appropriateness of the leadership activities to the proposed research and the integration of the leadership activities with the project; c) the extent to which these activities will develop or further enhance the PI's capacity for research leadership. All of the activities described should be commensurate with the PI's career stage.*

The leadership activities are collaborative and include a combination of external and internal processes. The main external ones are the production of a booklet for defence experts and the training of would-be defence experts. These demonstrate both good leadership and collaboration with potential impact. The internal processes centre on the relationship with the researcher. These are of a good, if not exceptional, quality.

The leadership activities are entirely appropriate. It is true that the applicants is uniquely placed to carry out the project. The support of her institution is also impressive. There is also a good overlap with other work which the applicant has undertaken and which can be seen as leadership.

The proposed activities include work in new areas for the applicant and so would seem set to enhance their capacity for research leadership. More leadership could have been shown if the researcher had been employed for a longer period and a co-author of the handbook.

While the experts group is said to be self-sustaining in the longer term, although it would be good to know more about how this would work in practice.

*Overall, the proposed leadership activities are*

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

	✓			
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### People

*Please comment on the people involved in this proposal, including the Fellow's ability or potential to provide intellectual leadership within their discipline and beyond. Refer to any scheme guidance available under "Help". You should comment on the training and development opportunities available for research staff on the project. This includes those in relation to research expertise, as well as wider development, e.g. in connection with activities proposed in the Pathways to Impact statement.*

The applicant is an experienced researcher who seems more than capable than providing the right sort of intellectual leadership. As noted, she is rightly claimed to be a leading expert in the field who is uniquely placed to carry out the work. It appears that the applicant is returning to music after a period concentrating on film.

I would have some concerns that the applicant has limited experience in managing relatively large scale project such as this one, as their previous experience appears to have been more on smaller projects. The support of her institution will be important here.

*Overall, the applicant's/applicants' work to date and ability to bring the project to completion are*

		✓		
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Management

*Please comment on the proposed management of the work outlined in the proposal, considering: (1) Feasibility of the project and its likelihood of completion within the proposed timescales; (2) Appropriateness of the project plan, including arrangements for reviewing progress; (3) The level of support from the host organisation; 4) Whether the Data Management Plan is appropriate, feasible and valid for the project. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.*

The project is certainly feasible and likely to be completed in the timeplan.

The project plan is appropriate, although it would have been good to know more about how the PDRA and applicant relationship will work in practice.

The level of support from the host organisation is very good.

*Overall, the proposed management of the project is*

		✓		
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Value for Money

Please comment on the value for money and appropriateness of resources requested in this proposal. You should ensure that you refer to any scheme-specific guidance available under 'Help'

The project's budget is generally well thought through and good, without being excessive. I do not see any major problems here, but there are some niggling issues. One aspect which concerns me is that there is a 3 months (at 60%) for editing a special edition of a journal. Given that that this will mean editing around 8 articles, this seems to be rather generous. Similarly the time allocated for writing 4000 words is generous. The amount of time given to the visit to the USA by the applicant does not seem to be justified.

Overall, the value for money of the project is

	✓			
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Outputs, Dissemination and Impact

Please comment on the proposed dissemination strategy and Pathways to Impact, including the extent to which the programme of work will result in high quality public output(s), and whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries might be and appropriate ways to engage with them throughout the project.

The proposal to produce a handbook and to hold workshops for would-be experts are excellent ideas. It would have been useful to know more about who the potential experts are. The films are also very useful, although a wider range of interviewees might be useful.

It would be useful to know how the handbook would be updated and maintained in the longer term, as it would seem likely to date somewhat quickly in terms of academic, legal and music developments. Publicising the handbook in *The Barrister* is a very good idea.

The academic outputs are rather more limited. 2 articles and an edited journal is not an exceptional output, although the journals targeted for the articles are entirely appropriate.

Much of the remaining output rests on the production of a special edition of one journal. However, other than an assertion that one of the editorial team (wrongly referred to here as the editor) has expressed an interest in this prospect, there appears to be no commitment from the journal to publish this special edition. A much stronger commitment from the journal (such as a letter of support) would have made the application stronger. The journal does not appear to have a tradition of publishing conference proceedings of the sort implied here and neither does it have a tradition of having editions edited by one person. The fact that the applicants has not previously edited a special edition may cause the potential journal some concerns. It is not clear what PDRA work on the issue actually means and what the relationship is between the chosen journal and the desire to include the work of new scholars. Overall this output seems to be uncertain and there does not seem to be a Plan B.

It is also unclear why a music journal has been selected and not a cultural studies one, when the objectives clearly state that this is about 'developing interdisciplinary cultural studies arguments' and that there will be a 'interdisciplinary cultural studies approach', with the aim to be to 'develop an impact model for cultural studies research'. In addition Music does not appear in the main list of academic beneficiaries (other than apparently being a subsection of Cultural Studies), but a music journal is still targeted as a major output

There is also an allocation of 3 months (at 60%) for editing a special edition of a journal. Given that that this will mean

editing around 8 articles, this seems to be rather generous. Similarly the time allocated for writing a 4000 word introduction seems generous.

Overall the proposed outputs and dissemination strategy are

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	✓ Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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Overall, Pathways to Impact, including identification of potential beneficiaries, is

Outstanding	✓ Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓ High	Medium	Low
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## Overall Assessment

### Your Conclusions

Please give your overall conclusions on this proposal, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring that you have taken the quality of both the research project and the leadership development plans into consideration. You should ensure that you refer to 'Help' for any scheme-specific guidance.

This is an entirely worthy project which deserves some funding. It seeks to address an aspect of the unequal treatment of young black men within the English and Welsh justice system and so to contribute to social justice.

The main weaknesses are that it fails to show how widespread the problem is and therefore runs the risk of being seen as somewhat niche. It will also need to be careful not to be seen as being biased and more rounded selection of interviewees would have been useful

The pathways to impact is generally very good, but the academic outputs are rather limited, with much hinging on a possible special edition which has not been secured.

Overall, there is a great deal of potential in this project and its development should be encouraged. However, the concerns noted above mean that it does not meet the very highest standards.

Please assign the proposal an overall grade, ensuring that you refer to the

My confidence level in assessing this

guidance under 'Help' for grade descriptions and any scheme-specific guidance.

6 (High)	✓ 5	4	3	2	1 (Low)
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is:

✓ High	Medium	Low
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# Leadership Fellows Peer Review

AHRC Reference: AH/T000058/1

Document Status: With Council

## Leadership Fellows (Open Call)

### Applicant Details

Applicant	Dr Eithne Quinn	Organisation	The University of Manchester
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### Title of Research Project

Prosecuting Rap: Criminal Justice and UK Black Youth Expressive Culture
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### Review Information

Response Due Date	27/02/2019	Reviewer Reference:	153794374
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### Research Council Contact Details

AHRC Administration Contact:	Email:	Telephone:
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### Quality

*Please comment on the quality and importance of the work proposed, considering: (1) Aims and Objectives; (2) Research Questions; (3) Research Context; (4) Research Method. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.*

This is an outstanding proposal of excellent quality and very high importance.

The fellowship proposes to progress research on a culturally important but critically neglected form of popular culture - UK rap music. Rap and its related genres (hip hop, grime, drill and so on) is perhaps the most influential and important popular musical form of the past 30 years. However, to my knowledge no-one has examined its increasing use in criminal court proceedings in the UK. The research attends to how a widely practised popular cultural activities is used in criminal proceedings, and through this the project aims to produce empirically grounded arguments, a rap evidence handbook, and to develop a network of scholar-expert witnesses to address the asymmetry between prosecution and defence counsels. The project aims to complicate the overly literal readings of rap made by prosecutors. Secondly it aims to intervene in the use of rap music within the criminal justice system, with impacts planned to support defence counsels. Thirdly the project aims to amplify the PI's leadership in this area through the networking and publication strategies. Finally the project aims to communicate with journalists, legal professionals, policy makers and civil liberties groups, to enhance understanding of this area. It is timely and important research.

The research questions are clear, focused, and appropriate. Taken together, the first set of questions, indicate how the project will probe how rap lyrics and music videos are interpreted and used by prosecutors in court room proceedings, the role of police rap-experts in criminal proceedings, how rap has been used to shore up gang narratives in order to secure

group convictions in 'common purpose' cases, and what racial and civil liberties issues these practices raise. There is very little scholarship on the role of rap in the criminal justice system in England and Wales and these research questions highlight how the project will produce important insights into this little understood area. The second set of research questions probe the qualities of rap that make it susceptible to such legal use, how the media have chronicled the role of rap in the criminal justice system, and investigate the most effective arguments that defence counsels can use to scrutinise and contest the Crown's overly-literal framing of rap music. It is good to see how the leadership and impact activities are underpinned by well focused research questions, which tease out the qualities of this cultural form, the use made of it by the media and crown prosecutors, and how that framing might be challenged by defence counsels.

This project fills a significant gap in the study of rap. Surprisingly, given the long-term development of this cultural form in the UK, there has been little research into the relation between rap and the criminal justice system in England and Wales, and none on the use of rap in court proceedings. The proposal shows a very strong situating of the project in relation to existing research on rap in the UK, rap-on-trial in the US, the broader field of hip-hop studies, and recent UK government and United Nations reports on race and the criminal justice system in England and Wales. The contextualisation is strong, appropriately broad and relevant.

The project is rigorous in both its aims and its methods. The project proposes to analyse legal material on the use of rap in criminal court proceedings in order to produce detailed and original arguments for the rap evidence handbook, the expert witness training sessions and the journal articles. The use of critical textual analysis to examine the discourses that circulate in and around rap music at the 'meso' level of criminal proceedings, is appropriate given the project's aims. As the UK's leading defence expert in rap music, the PI is well placed to carry out this research, in collaboration with a PDRA.

*Overall, the quality and importance of the work proposed is*

✓				
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

*My confidence level in assessing this is:*

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### **Proposed Leadership Activities**

*Please comment on: a) the leadership activities which will be undertaken during the project and the degree to which they are collaborative; b) the appropriateness of the leadership activities to the proposed research and the integration of the leadership activities with the project; c) the extent to which these activities will develop or further enhance the PI's capacity for research leadership. All of the activities described should be commensurate with the PI's career stage.*

The leadership activities are well integrated with the proposed research and are commensurate with the PI's career stage. The PI has already established relationships with rap-on-trial scholars in the US, a number of Barrister's chambers in the UK, and the project partner, the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust. The proposal builds on these relations through collaborative activities, such as the training event for rap defence expert witnesses, the launch event for the defence handbook at Manchester Library in collaboration with the project partner, and the international conference aimed at scholars, legal professionals, and civil liberties groups. The project identifies a number of areas in which the PI's capacity for research leadership will be further enhanced, including the management of a post-doctoral researcher, co-authoring, and editing. The PI already has a track record of managing research grants and publishing high quality research. By including a PDRA on this project, the proposal provides the PI with the opportunity to acquire experience of managing a researcher and supporting their career development. The two co-authored journal articles and special issue with a substantive introduction ensure that the leadership activities are grounded within the research. The leadership and impact activities, including the launch of the prosecuting rap handbook, the development of a network of scholar expert witnesses through two training events in the UK, the internationalisation of the research through the PI's contribution to the rap-on-trial defence manual with scholars in the US, and the series of short films are very well integrated into the project. These leadership activities will enable the PI to set the research agenda in the field and enhance her profile as the UK's leading

rap scholar expert witness.

Overall, the proposed leadership activities are

✓				
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

My confidence level in assessing this is:

	✓	
High	Medium	Low

### People

Please comment on the people involved in this proposal, including the Fellow's ability or potential to provide intellectual leadership within their discipline and beyond. Refer to any scheme guidance available under "Help". You should comment on the training and development opportunities available for research staff on the project. This includes those in relation to research expertise, as well as wider development, e.g. in connection with activities proposed in the Pathways to Impact statement.

The proposed staffing on this project is very strong. The PI has a substantial publication record in the broad area of the fellowship, with a monograph on the gangsta genre of rap music which has been influential in the field of hip-hop studies. In addition, the PI has already established a track record as a rap music expert witness in the UK and has already produced significant impacts through this activity. The PI is well placed to provide intellectual leadership in this area, with strong links to leading rap-on-trial scholars in the US. The planned leadership activities, including the scholar-expert network, the special issue, and the collaborative publications, and the conferences are all appropriate to developing her leadership in the area of UK rap. The inclusion of a PDRA on the project forms an important part of developing the PI's leadership and management skills. The proposal includes good career development opportunities for the PDRA. I am also pleased to see that the PI has sought to build an international advisory board, with substantial experience in this area.

Overall, the applicant's/applicants' work to date and ability to bring the project to completion are

	✓			
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Management

Please comment on the proposed management of the work outlined in the proposal, considering: (1) Feasibility of the project and its likelihood of completion within the proposed timescales; (2) Appropriateness of the project plan, including arrangements for reviewing progress; (3) The level of support from the host organisation; 4) Whether the Data Management Plan is appropriate, feasible and valid for the project. Further guidance is available under 'Help'.

The project is ambitious, but achievable. The PI has experience of managing research projects and organising an international conference. There are good plans for the induction and management of the PDRA on the project. Adequate time has been allocated for the writing of the co-authored publications. There is already established good access to relevant collaborators in the legal field. The PI has already developed substantial expertise in this area, and the leadership development and impact activities are well supported by her links with scholars in the US and Barrister's chambers in the UK. The project workplan is well organised, with good milestones, and the PI will be supported by an international advisory board with substantial expertise in this area. There is strong support from the host institution, which has already invested in the PI's leadership development through a strategic investment fund grant. The data management plan is robust, and appropriate for the project. Overall the proposed management of the project is very good, and the aims are clearly

achievable within the proposed timescales.

Overall, the proposed management of the project is

✓				
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Value for Money

Please comment on the value for money and appropriateness of resources requested in this proposal. You should ensure that you refer to any scheme-specific guidance available under 'Help'

In general, this project represents very good value for money.

The PI's time has been carefully allocated. The PI, on whose shoulders the main burden of research and impact activities will fall, accounts for the most substantial project cost. Given the ambitious research, impact and leadership activities, it is hard to see how this cost could be reduced. The costs for the PDRA are also appropriate, given the research they will need to undertake and the project's emphasis on developing collaborative publications. The PI needs to spend 80% of her time for the first six months, followed by twelve months at 60%, this seems critical for ensuring that the volume of research, impact and leadership activities are achievable. The RA will work on the project at 100% of their time. This seems appropriate to recruit and retain a suitable candidate for the project and to complete the interviews, co-authored journal and press articles and organising the dissemination activities. The resources requested are appropriate for the project and include reasonable travel and subsistence costings for research in the UK and the US, as well as reasonable costings for conference and impact activities in the UK.

Overall I think the project offers very good value for money given the importance and originality of the research and impact activities, and the experience of the PI proposing this.

Overall, the value for money of the project is

	✓			
Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory

My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓		
High	Medium	Low

### Outputs, Dissemination and Impact

Please comment on the proposed dissemination strategy and Pathways to Impact, including the extent to which the programme of work will result in high quality public output(s), and whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries might be and appropriate ways to engage with them throughout the project.

There are excellent plans for outputs, dissemination and impact. Outputs are wide-ranging and include symposia, two journal articles, a special issue, two workshops, and print journalism. This range will facilitate engagement with multiple, relevant communities and beneficiaries which has real potential for impact across academic study, the criminal justice system, policy makers, civil liberties groups and more.

The PI has already established a strong publication track record and has received an expression of interest from the editor of a high quality journal for the special issue. The target journals for the articles and the special issue, indicates that the proposed journal articles and special issue will be of outstanding quality. The impact strategy is outstanding, clearly demonstrating the transformative effects that the project will produce in the criminal justice system. The combination of the

rap evidence handbook, the training and development of a self-sustaining network of rap scholar-experts, and the internationalisation of the project's impact through established relationships with US scholars, will ensure that there will be a broader impact beyond the temporal scope of this particular project.

Overall the proposed outputs and dissemination strategy are

✓ Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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Overall, Pathways to Impact, including identification of potential beneficiaries, is

✓ Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓ High	Medium	Low
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## Overall Assessment

### Your Conclusions

Please give your overall conclusions on this proposal, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring that you have taken the quality of both the research project and the leadership development plans into consideration. You should ensure that you refer to 'Help' for any scheme-specific guidance.

Overall, this reads as an outstanding, timely, socially and critically relevant research proposal, with a PI who seems excellently situated to be able to deliver the project, and a strong advisory board to support her. The aims, objectives and research questions are coherent and achievable; the project partner and collaborators involved are also clearly identified and secured. The understanding of the research context is very strong. This is a very timely proposal, in the context of the Young and Lammy Reviews of race in the criminal justice system in England and Wales and reports by Amnesty International and the UN Special Rapporteur on racial bias in the use of 'gangs' matrix databases by police forces. The proposal has many strengths, not only in terms of the detail and attention given to the conception and planning of the project, but also in terms of its breadth, consideration and careful attention to the different stakeholders it identifies. It aims to build upon the exemplary track record the PI has established in this under-researched area. Its inter-disciplinary nature makes it attractive to many (overlapping) areas and communities, from post-colonial studies, cultural studies, criminology, the criminal justice system, and civil liberties groups. Beneficiaries and impact pathways are all clear. As the project aims to move between research on the use of rap in legal cases and the production of impacts designed to intervene in the use of rap in legal cases, this project potentially provides excellent value for money in terms of its reach beyond its area of speciality within academia. It engages critically and dynamically with rap as a now vital cultural practice in order to help us better understand how rap has come to be used as evidence in criminal proceedings. Finally, the project plan includes strong leadership development activities (including editing a special issue, managing a post-doc, co-authoring publications, and fostering a network of rap scholar expert witnesses) sound management plans, and very reasonable value for money.

Please assign the proposal an overall grade, ensuring that you refer to the guidance under 'Help' for grade descriptions and any scheme-specific guidance.

✓ 6 (High)	5	4	3	2	1 (Low)
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My confidence level in assessing this is:

✓ High	Medium	Low
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