



2025 Annual Conference
Wednesday 23 - Friday 25 April
University of Manchester



PLENARY

Aaron Winter

THURSDAY 24 APRIL 2025
17:15 - 18:45

WHAT CAN SOCIOLOGY SAY ABOUT RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND THE MAINSTREAMING OF RACISM AND THE FAR RIGHT?

In recent years, we have witnessed a resurgence of an increasingly emboldened and mainstreamed far right in Britain and globally. In response, there has been a groundswell of academic interest and analysis. Despite obvious relevance, sociology has not played a significant role in a field that is dominated by political science, terrorism studies, and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE), as well as their often normative, system-supportive 'problem solving' frameworks and assumptions. In this academic context, as in wider society and politics, the far right is often exceptionalised, treated as a proxy for both racism and class inequality, and represented as a primary threat to social relations, the political mainstream, the state and democracy. The far right is rarely treated as part of the mainstream or linked to wider structural and systemic issues and inequalities, notably racism, with which sociology engages, while a focus on the exceptional and extreme distract from and even reinforce these. In this talk, Aaron Winter will examine what sociology in general, and sociology of race and racism in particular, can offer to help us understand the far right and its place and function within white supremacy and racial capitalism, as well as point a way forward to more critical scholarship and radical responses that address not only the far right, but the system that underpins it.



Dr Aaron Winter is Senior Lecturer in Sociology (Race and Anti-Racism) and Director of the Centre for Alternatives to Social and Economic Inequalities (CASEI) at Lancaster University. He researches the far right with a focus on racism, historical change, mainstreaming, and state responses to right-wing extremism and terrorism. He is co-editor of [Reflexivity in Criminological Research](#) (Palgrave 2014), [Historical Perspectives on Organised Crime and Terrorism](#) (Routledge 2018) and [Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice](#) (Routledge 2020), and co-author, with Aurelien Mondon, of [Reactionary Democracy: How Racism and the Populist Far Right Became Mainstream](#) (Verso 2020). He has published in many academic journals as well as OpenDemocracy, *The Independent*, *Discover Society*, Novara Media and *Jacobin*, and appears frequently in the media, including the BBC, LBC, Times Radio, France 24, Al Jazeera, *NewStatesman*, *The Times*, *Washington Post*, *HuffPost*, *Kathimerini*, *der Freitag* and *le Temps*. He is co-editor of *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* and the

Manchester University Press series *Racism, Resistance and Social Change*; a Trustee of the Sociological Review Foundation; on the editorial board of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*; and on the organising committee of the Reactionary Politics Research Network (RPRN). He previously served as a BSA Trustee, co-convenor of the Race & Ethnicity Study Group and coordinator of both the Social Divisions/Social Identities and Race, Ethnicity & Migration BSA Annual Conference streams.

Chair: Paul Ian Campbell, University of Leicester, BSA Membership Trustee

