

## **Sociology's Past and Future: 75 Years of the BSA Les Back Presidential Address**

By looking back at the keynotes of past BSA Presidents, Les Back takes stock of sociologists' changing priorities over the past 75 years. Through doing so, he will argue for the value of association and sociology as a shared craft in the context of the attacks on Higher Education in our current moment. He explores the paradox that, while sociologists are losing their jobs across the UK because of cuts to Higher Education, studying sociology is more popular than ever in schools. He will talk about his experience visiting schools and conducting outreach in his role as BSA President. He will offer a portrait of what today's students look for and hope for in studying sociology theoretically and imaginatively. The sociological invitation to live in doubt in the service of understanding is particularly precious given the global circulation of disinformation and lies. Sociology's great gift in this context is its capacity to weigh and judge information and evidence that circulate in a digital environment at unprecedented scale and speed. During such dark times, he will argue that there are still more opportunities than ever to practice sociology innovatively, and he will conclude by making a case for sociology's value and values as a listener's art and a sociable science in the service of freedom and justice.