

Funding the Future

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Good stuff from Tim Horton, [research director of the Fabians in the Guardian](#):

There are huge challenges for the left in thinking about the future role of the state. Our ageing society will require more services than can be funded simply out of taxation, requiring tough trade-offs. Meanwhile, markets can provide many services they couldn't in 1945, challenging government's role as provider.

Glasman's Blue Labour project emphasises the role of identity and belonging in politics and has enriched Labour's conversation about its future. But it won't achieve its aims if it gets narrowed into a fixation with localism and voluntarism.

Yes, our attachment to institutions is often local and informal. But from the BBC to the NHS to the RAF, many of our favourite institutions are national and central. And, yes, place is important in our identity. But a nation is a place too. So Glasman is right that Labour must speak to feelings of belonging. But this will clearly be a politics that incorporates, not jettisons, the state.

Absolutely true.

I think a lot more of us should be saying, a lot more often, that we believe in the vital role of the state in our economy.

It doesn't mean we don't like the private sector: it's vital too. Essential even, but then so too is the state. And people are frightened to say it. Good for the Fabians for still saying so.