

Independence and the Female Perspective



Contributed Article

This week there have been a variety of developments on referendum issues. From the currency 'debate' to the fleeting intervention by Jose Manuel Barrosa on the matter of joining the EU. Both of these rather unfortunately were again simply scare stories and posturing. This tact is increasingly common, most unfortunate and does not do the seriousness of the debate any justice whatsoever.

Behind the scenes, in the real world, the two governments know there will be a currency agreement. At this stage Westminster are simply maneuvering to their start point for negotiations. A fairly understandable move but strange in the sense of the tactless manner and their bullying nature.

With regard Sr Barrosa's involvement it is not the first time he has chipped in. Coincidentally it is not the first time he has immediately been left in solitude by the EU and his own government. There is the small matter of the EU Commission not actually being responsible for who is accepted to the EU. There is the small matter of his comparisons not applying to the case of Scotland remaining in the EU, especially his inappropriate liking of us to Kosova. And there is the small matter of again the Spanish Foreign Minister immediately distancing himself and the Spanish gobierno from the view opined.

As topical as they are, however, those rebuttals are not the point of this article. The impact on the doors and in conversation is of most interest in the aftermath.

There is the general perception that the male psyche is predominantly the one that will refuse to be threatened and object to the bullying tone from Westminster – or perhaps we are simply more vocal in our disdain. Indeed there are polls and research to back this up. If we are to presume that is the norm then actions like the Cameron 'lovebomb' followed by the Osbourne currency bluff might not show any great level of movement to Yes in the male voter group. After all, the last week is not the first we have been lectured and browbeat with empty rhetoric to date.

What has been more noticeable in recent conversations has been the reaction from females. Far more have commented on their dislike of being spoken down to and especially the manner and tone used. The feelings alluded to have been expressed in far more vocal terms than I have previously come across in the campaign. When canvassing or conversing, the women engaged with have tended to be slightly more reticent, reserved in their strength of feeling and looking for more substance to both the 'yes' and 'no' arguments – a little less emotive if you like. Not in the last week it hasn't been though. I guess nobody likes to be talked down to and treated like they are daft.

I'm not saying that suddenly every female voter has suddenly jump up from an undecided '4' to an '8' in favour in independence. I'm not claiming that a plethora of women have come forward wanting to actively campaign now though some of both have occurred. I am, however, saying that not a single person has said that they are now moving towards a 'no' vote – not one. Of those with a more open mind every comment has been to the contrary and in favour of a 'yes' come September 18th.

What else is striking is the number of women wanting to see and hear debate that relates to what they feel are a women's perspective on issues and matters. It seems the perception is that this is a male dominated debate still and their questions are not being heard. To this mind it was good to see that

Better Together put up two female MSPs in the BBC 'debate' from Kelso this week. Again though, it was unfortunate that the content from Ruth Davidson and the normally much better Jenny Marra was rather weak. If the best case for the Union status quo is that the English and the Welsh will be spiteful towards us then that's hardly a reason to stay attached.

In the 'Yes' campaign events around Edinburgh there has been a fairer gender balance with the likes of Fiona Hyslop MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, Kathleen Caskie, Margo MacDonald MSP, Jill Murphy, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Jeane Freeman etc contributing considerably. These have tended to be talks in public halls where the stage is shared with other speakers, each getting about 10 minutes. Whilst this is great for diversity of gender, race, politics, age etc what I am being told is that they are not specific to the female voter in an environment allowing questions that relates to pertinent issues and questions.

With this specifically in mind we are holding an event in the Northfield Hotel on Lasswade Road. Whilst it is billed as a 'Business Lunch', the main speakers are quite specifically chosen after listening to the feedback and there will be considerable time allocated to a question and answer session with no subject taboo.

Angel Constance MSP and Minister for Youth Employment will be in attendance along with Michelle Thomson of both Business For Scotland and Women For Indy. These are both high caliber speakers who are open in discussion and very well versed in the positive case for independence.

The event is for anyone who wishes to attend but obviously the hope is a significant number of undecideds attend and air their views. When it comes to the female perspective on the debate this is an excellent opportunity to raise questions and enjoy discussion.

The link for it is here and it includes how to access tickets

–

Yes Edinburgh South Business Lunch –

http://yesscotland.nationbuilder.com/neilhay/yes_edinburgh_southern_business_lunch

Submitted by [Neil Hay](#)

