Being exposed to more information increases chances of voters moving to Yes

By Liam Kirkaldy

Giving voters more information on the referendum increases the chances of them supporting independence, according to a study from the University of Edinburgh.

The study found that when presented with balanced information on the referendum (eight articles for Yes and eight for No) support for independence rose by between 10-15 per cent.

Researchers tested the effect of reading campaign material, news sources and academic work on 300 individuals, 70 per cent of whom said they were undecided before-hand.

By the end of the test, the study found that when more information was provided, the level of indecision among voters halved.

Researcher Davide Morisi from the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the EUI in Florence said: "Since independence is related to more uncertainty than keeping the status quo, reading convincing arguments has a stronger effect on a Yes vote, because it contributes to reducing these uncertainties to an 'acceptable' level."

The voters were split into groups and presented with 16 articles, eight in favour of independence and eight against. Each voter was told they could only read eight of the 16 items.

Some groups were allowed to choose which articles they read, while others were made to pick four supporting each side of the debate.

The majority of participants who could choose their articles opted for a balance of items, but voters who were already decided were significantly more likely to select an unbalanced number of articles.

Researchers said that the likelihood of voting No among undecided voters only increased in the group that chose which articles to read and, even then, only in a few cases.

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