

The Times – Red Box, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016, Tim Bale, Monica Poletti, Paul Webb

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/redbox/topic/the-europe-question/what-tory-activists-think-about-camerons-deal-and-staying-in-the-eu>

## What Tory activists think about Cameron's deal... and staying in the EU

*Among the majority of membership which is over (in some cases a long way over) 35, the split between those who want to leave and those who want to stay resembles the split overall. That is, six out of ten want to leave, three out of ten want to stay and one in ten have yet to decide.*

*Among the precious minority of Conservative party members aged 18-34, however, things are much closer. True, some 52 per cent want out, but that leaves 41 per cent who want in. That should give any Tory with a serious eye to the future food, or even pause, for thought.*

It seems like a lifetime ago, even though it was only a fortnight. Hardly was the printer-ink dry on David Cameron's late deal in Brussels before the Brexit debate had moved on to the more fundamental questions involved in Britain's decision to leave or to remain in the EU.

Anyone who's ever gone to pre-natal classes may be familiar with the feeling. You spend weeks and months obsessing over the birth, only to find that it's all over in a matter of hours – and now you're into the really serious stuff.

None of this means, however, that we should forget about the deal altogether, not least because, before it was done anyway, many Conservatives were claiming that what Cameron came back with would help them make their minds up.

Indeed, when, with the help of YouGov, we surveyed grassroots Tories in April 2015, two-thirds of them told us that their vote would depend on the terms of the PM's renegotiation.

Now, even if some of those were simply trying to appear fair-minded – the sort of people prepared to give the man who'd just won them a general election a chance – the sheer size of that figure suggested that a large number of ordinary members of the Conservative party hadn't yet decided which way to jump.

But that was then and this is now. And now is make your mind up time. What YouGov's latest polling of Conservative party members shows is that most of those who have now made up their minds have broken for Brexit.

While one in ten are still undecided, six out of ten members are voting to leave – twice as many as the 30 per cent following David Cameron's lead and voting to remain.

### How Conservative members would vote on EU

	Remain a member of the European Union	Leave the European Union	Don't know
All Members (N=1,005)	28.76	60.3	10.95

Cameron's deal does appear to have made some difference. Overall, most party members were not impressed. Given how Eurosceptic they are, however, the fact that though 57 per cent of them thought it was a bad deal 43 per cent thought it was good could still count as a win for the PM.

It is ultimately impossible, of course, to say with certainty whether views on the need to stay or leave were driven by views on the deal, or vice versa, but there's clearly a correlation between the two.

Some 89 per cent of those who thought Cameron got a bad deal are going to vote to leave, whereas 62 per cent of those who thought he pulled off a good deal are voting to remain.

### Voter intention based on view of Cameron's deal

Table 3 DC's deal and vote	Remain a member of the European Union	Leave the European Union	Don't know
All Members (N=1,005)	28.76	60.3	10.95
Good Deal	<b>61.78</b>	24.04	14.18
Bad Deal	4.11	<b>88.55</b>	7.33

Drilling down into the figures allows us once more to challenge the common wisdom that Tory activists are particularly more likely to want out of the EU.

If we separate party members into those who canvassed voters in 2015, either face to face or on the phone, and those who didn't, then the first group are more likely to be voting to leave. But the difference (62 per cent of the activists as against 58 per cent of the rest) is tiny: just four percentage points.

### Voter intention based on level of activism

	Remain a member of the European Union	Leave the European Union	Don't know
All Members (N=1,005)	28.76	60.3	10.95
Low intensity' activity*	32.45	<b>58.49</b>	9.06
High intensity' activity**	27.59	<b>61.87</b>	10.55

\* low intensity activity: displaying election poster, liking on Facebook, following a political party on Twitter

\*\*high intensity activity: canvassing on the telephone, canvassing door to door

Whether this inconvenient truth will ever register with commentators hooked on the narrative

that Cameron is in serious trouble with precisely those Tory members the party relies on to deliver its ground game is a moot point.

It's a point worth making, however, when we speculate about whether what we might call the really useful part of the party in the country will simply cease to function if voters reject Brexit. Yes, only one in three will be delighted while six out of ten will be disappointed. But whether most of the latter group will walk away from the party in disgust is highly debateable.

In fact, what really distinguishes Outers and Inners among the Tory membership is first, ideology, and second, age.

Here the differences are really striking. More than half (56 per cent, to be precise) of the 12 per cent of members who see themselves as on the left of the party are planning to vote to remain. And eight out of ten of the 45 per cent of members who regard themselves as on the right of the party are going to vote to leave. Most Tories are Eurosceptic, but the real headbangers are on the right.

#### Voter intention by Tory ideology

	Remain a member of the European Union	Leave the European Union	Don't know
All Members (N=1,005)	28.76	60.3	10.95
On the right of the party	11.97	<b>79.6</b>	8.43
On the centre of the party	38.86	48.1	13.03
On the left of the party	<b>55.65</b>	32.26	12.1

But age also matters.

Among the majority of membership which is over (in some cases a long way over) 35, the split between those who want to leave and those who want to stay resembles the split overall. That is, six out of ten want to leave, three out of ten want to stay and one in ten have yet to decide.

#### Voter intention by age of Tory members

	Remain a member of the European Union	Leave the European Union	Don't know
All Members (N=1,005)	28.76	60.3	10.95
18-34	<b>41.35</b>	51.92	6.73
35+	27.34	<b>61.16</b>	11.5

Among the precious minority of Conservative party members aged 18-34, however, things are much closer. True, some 52 per cent want out, but that leaves 41 per cent who want in. That should give any Tory with a serious eye to the future food, or even pause, for thought.