

When we look in detail at who is in favour of and who is against further integration, we find some striking variation (see Table 7.6). There is a clear gender gap, with men markedly more pro-integration than women. Rather surprisingly, support for further integration is strongest in Dublin and in urban constituencies generally and is weakest in rural constituencies, even though it is generally assumed that the financial benefits of EU membership have been felt most directly in rural areas, and even though support in Dublin for European integration has been below the national average in every referendum held to date. The Dublin membership of Fine Gael is much more integrationist in its views than Dubliners generally are.

Religiosity is related to attitudes, though not in a straightforward way: those who attend least are the most supportive of further European integration, but the least supportive are weekly attenders at church, not those who attend more often than weekly. Generally, the more clericalist a member's attitudes are, the less enthusiastic he or she is about the prospect of further integration. On all measures of clericalism, those who are most clerical are the most likely to feel that European integration has already gone too far. Although our survey did not ask members about their reasons for supporting or opposing further integration, the implication here is that many of the more clericalist members of Fine Gael, and no doubt of society generally, see the EU as a secularising force that has been partly responsible for the liberalising trend within Irish society in recent years.

Occupation and education, which of course are strongly related to each other, are both related to attitudes towards integration. The occupational differences are sharp, with a 58–22 balance in favour of further integration among middle-class members at one end of the scale and a 27–37 balance against it among farmers at the other end. Similarly, those with university education are more strongly in favour of further European integration than any other sub-group in our sample, while those whose education ended at national school are less in favour than any other sub-group. Age, in contrast, is only weakly related: younger members are a little more in favour than older members, but the relationship is not statistically significant. *Irish Times* readers are also strongly supportive of the integration process, readers of the *Irish Independent* are less strongly in favour, while among members who read neither of these papers more feel that integration has already gone too far than want to see it carried further.

In addition, we can see that those who have attended a European People's Party conference and met members of Fine Gael's allied parties are far more strongly in favour of further integration than those who have not done so. We cannot tell, of course, which way the causal link runs – whether pro-integration members are more likely to go to such conferences in the first place, or whether attending such conferences makes members more pro-integration, or perhaps both. Indeed, activism generally, not just when it comes to attending European conferences, is related to attitudes to the EU, as Table 7.6 shows; the more active a member is, the more favourable he or she is towards the idea of further integration. One implication of this is that the views expressed by those members

Table 7.6: Socio-demographic background and attitudes to European integration

	<i>European integration</i>			All members
	should be pushed further	has already gone too far	don't know	
All members	38	31	31	100
Male	41	29	30	100
Female	31	34	35	100
Dublin	55	22	24	100
Rest of Leinster	42	26	32	100
Munster	33	36	31	100
Connacht–Ulster	32	32	36	100
Urban constituency	51	25	24	100
Rural constituency	34	32	34	100
Attend church more than weekly	41	30	29	100
Attend church weekly	32	33	35	100
Attend church less than weekly	57	23	20	100
AB social group	58	22	20	100
C1 social group	44	31	25	100
C2 social group	38	31	31	100
DE social group	33	28	39	100
Farmer	27	37	36	100
University education	58	25	17	100
National school education only	26	33	41	100
Other educational background	39	32	30	100
Aged 54 or below	41	29	30	100
Aged 55 or more	34	33	33	100
<i>Irish Times</i> reader	57	23	20	100
<i>Irish Independent</i> reader	37	31	32	100
Reader of other paper or no paper	30	34	36	100
Have attended EPP conference	50	27	23	100
Have not attended EPP conference	35	31	33	100
Very active FG member	52	26	21	100
Moderately active FG member	44	28	28	100
Moderately inactive FG member	34	31	35	100
Very inactive FG member	30	34	36	100

Source: Fine Gael members' questionnaire, questions 49, 35, 46, 42, 41, 47, 23b.