



UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
TRINITY COLLEGE
DUBLIN 2, IRELAND

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Dear Fine Gael member

The aim of this survey is to understand more about the backgrounds, beliefs and activities of ordinary Fine Gael party members. The views of people like yourself may be ignored in political debate and our research will help to put that right. We are therefore sending this set of questions which we would like you to answer. The questionnaire should take about 40 minutes to complete. Please return the completed questionnaire to us in the enclosed postage paid envelope as soon as possible.

We selected your name and address at random from a list of party members held by Fine Gael head office. **Your individual anonymity in this project is guaranteed by law.** Fine Gael will receive only our general conclusions, based on our overall analysis of the replies.

The numbers below include an identification number for mailing the questionnaire. This is so that we can cross your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned to us. **Your name and address will never be placed on the questionnaire and nobody except ourselves will ever know who answered the questionnaires.** The other numbers are simply references to the region and constituency in which you live.

If you have any questions at all about the project please feel free to ring 01-6081070. The questionnaire should take about 40 minutes to complete.

For every completed questionnaire we receive we will donate 50p to a charity. If everyone responds this will provide nearly £2000 to the charities of your choice. Please indicate which of the following charities you would like your completed questionnaire to benefit (tick one):

- ☐ St Vincent de Paul
- ☐ Concern
- ☐ Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
- ☐ National Council for the Blind

Thank you for your help.

Dr Michael Gallagher
Dr Michael Marsh

INTRODUCTION

NO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE IS NEEDED TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, ON WHICH WE ARE SURE THAT EVERYONE WILL HAVE AN OPINION.

The questions we will ask you cover a wide range of subjects. Most of them can be answered by placing an 'X' against the answer you would like to give. For example:

Were you a member of Fine Gael at the time of the last general election?

1. Yes

X

2. No

If you were a member at the time of the last election, put a cross in the first row box as indicated. If not, put a cross in the second box.

In some cases we will ask you to indicate how strongly you feel about something by placing an 'X' in an appropriate column. For example, to answer the question "How important do you think it is for a TD to speak in Dáil debates?" you should put an 'X' in the appropriate column. The illustration below would show you thought it was quite important.

	1 very important	2 quite important	3 not very important	4 not at all important
How important do you think it is for a TD to speak in Dáil debates?		X		

In a few cases you are asked to write numbers into boxes. For instance:

What year did you join Fine Gael? **Write in**

1	9	6	8
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Most of this questionnaire is designed to be read by a computer, so whether you are asked to write an 'X' or a number in a box, please make sure that what you write fits INSIDE the box and does not overflow into any other box. Also, will you please use black or blue ink, or a heavy pencil.

We want everyone to take part, not just those with strong views about a particular issue. The questionnaire should not take too long to complete and we think you will find it interesting and enjoyable. It should be completed **ONLY** by the person to whom it was sent, so that responses will reflect all shades of opinion within the Fine Gael party.

When you have filled it in, please place it in the enclosed FREEPOST envelope and post it back as soon as you possibly can.

SECTION 1

1. Would you call yourself a very strong supporter of Fine Gael, fairly strong, not very strong, or not at all strong?

1. Very strong
2. Fairly strong
3. Not very strong
4. Not at all strong

2. Thinking back to the time you first joined Fine Gael, did you approach the party to apply for membership, or did Fine Gael approach you?

1. I approached the party
2. The party approached me
3. Don't remember

3. In approximately which year did you join Fine Gael?

(Write in)

1	9		
---	---	--	--

4a. Have you been a member continuously since that time?

1. Yes
2. No

4b. Are you, or have you ever been, a member of Young Fine Gael?

1. Yes
2. No

5. Before you joined the party, were either your father or mother a member of Fine Gael?

1. Father and mother were members
2. Father only was a member
3. Mother only was a member
4. Neither were members

6. What was your most important reason for joining Fine Gael?
Please put an 'X' in ONE box only

	Most important
1. To get Fine Gael into government, or keep it there	☐
2. A belief in what Fine Gael stands for	☐
3. A good way to meet interesting people and extend my social life	☐
4. Opposition to Fianna Fáil	☐
5. As a first step in a political career	☐
6. Influence of family and/or friends	☐
7. Other (specify)	☐

7. Does your family have a tradition of supporting Fine Gael and Cumann na nGaedheal, going back to the civil war of 1922–23?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐

8. Thinking back over the last twelve months, about how often, as far as you know, has your local branch met?

1. Not at all	☐
2. Once or twice	☐
3. 3-5 times	☐
4. More than 5 times	☐
5. Don't know	☐

9. And during the last twelve months, how often have you personally attended a local Fine Gael branch meeting?

1. Not at all	☐
2. Once or twice	☐
3. 3-5 times	☐
4. More than 5 times	☐

10. Are you in frequent contact with a number of members of your branch through your work or social life?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐

11. Do you live in the constituency where your branch is located?

1. Yes
2. No

12. Thinking about the last local meeting you attended, how much time was spent on each of the following?

	No time	Some time	Most of the time	All of the time
1 Internal party organisation matters	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Fund raising	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Local political matters	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 National political matters	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. How active do you consider yourself to be in Fine Gael, relative to the average member?

1. Very active
2. Fairly active
3. Not very active
4. Not at all active

14. Are you more active or less active within the party than you were four years ago, (or when you joined if this was less than 4 years ago) ?

1. More active
2. Less active
3. About the same

If you are now more active or less active:

15. What is the most important reason why you are more active or less active than four years ago?

WRITE IN _____

16. Approximately how much money do you give to Fine Gael every year, taking into account membership fees, Superdraw, and any other donations?

1. Nothing
2. Less than £10
3. £10 to £50
4. £50 to £100
5. £100 or more

SECTION 2

17. Over the last four years, have you found that you tend to get actively involved in the party only at election times?

1. Yes

2. No

18a. Did you take an active part in any Fine Gael election campaigns over the last four years?

1. Yes

2. No

IF NO go on to question 20

IF YES

18b. What form did your activity take? (Put an 'X' against EACH activity you took part in)

1. Door to door canvassing

2. Mailing or distributing campaign literature

3. Other activities (specify below)

If Other: Please Specify:

19a. If you worked in the last general election, were you working primarily for the election of one particular candidate or equally for all the Fine Gael candidates?

1. One particular candidate

2. Equally for all candidates

If you were working for one particular candidate in the general election

19b. Was that candidate known to you personally **before** the campaign?

1. Yes, known personally

2. No, not known personally

19c. If you worked in the last local election, were you working primarily for the election of one particular candidate or equally for all the Fine Gael candidates?

1. One particular candidate

2. Equally for all candidates

If you were working for one particular candidate in the local election

19d. Was that candidate known to you personally?

1. Yes, known personally

2. No, not known personally

20. Do you at present hold any branch or constituency organisation office(s) within Fine Gael (e.g. secretary, treasurer)?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

IF YES, WRITE IN THE TITLE OF YOUR OFFICE (If you hold more than on office, write in the title of the most important one)

If you do not hold any office at present:

20a In the last three years, have you held or stood for any branch or constituency organisation office(s) within Fine Gael?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

21. How much time do you devote to party activities in the average month?

- 1. None
- 2. Up to 5 hours
- 3. More than 5 hours

23a. Did you take part in a constituency convention to select Fine Gael candidates for the 1997 general election?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

23aa. Did you take part in a constituency convention to select Fine Gael candidates for the 1999 local elections?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

23b. Have you ever attended a European party conference and met members of Fine Gael's allied parties in the European Parliament?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

24. How interested would you say you are in national political issues?

- 1. Very interested
- 2. Quite interested
- 3. Not at all interested

25. Have you ever stood for office on behalf of Fine Gael, in a local council election, or a Dáil election?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

26. Have you ever sought a party nomination to contest a local or general election?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

27. Are you, or do you hope some day to be, a TD or local councillor, or aren't you interested in a political career?

- 1. Already a councillor or TD
- 2. Hope to be a public representative
- 3. Not interested in a political career

28. At the divorce referendum in 1995, did you manage to vote, and if so did you vote Yes to permit divorce, or No to maintain the ban on divorce?

- 1. Did not vote
- 2. Voted Yes
- 3. Voted No

29. Did you take an active part in campaigning during the referendum on divorce in 1995, and if so did you work for a Yes vote, to permit divorce, or did you work for a No vote, to maintain the ban on divorce?

- 1. Did not take an active part
- 2. Took an active part for a Yes vote
- 3. Took an active part for a No vote

SECTION 3

30. Have you had any personal contact with any of the Fine Gael TDs for your constituency over the last 12 months?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

31. Have you had any personal contact with any of the Fine Gael councillors for your area over the last 12 months?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

32. Do you sometimes pass on requests for assistance from people in the constituency to any of the Fine Gael TDs for the constituency?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

33. Do you think of yourself as a strong supporter of one of the party's leading politicians in the constituency, or would you say you supported all of the party's politicians equally?

- 1. Strong supporter of one of the leading politicians
- 2. Support all the party's politicians equally

34. Are you currently a member of any of the following groups or organisations?
Please indicate using an 'X' as many as apply:

34.1. Irish Farmers' Association or other farming association

34.2. A trade union (please specify)

34.3. Local residents' association

34.4. Local community association

34.5. Chamber of Commerce or Junior Chamber

34.6 The GAA

34.7. Irish Countrywomen's Association

Other (please write in)

We would now like you to give us some personal details.

35. Are you male or female

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

36. Which of these descriptions applies to what you were doing last week, that is, in the seven days ending last Sunday?

Please place an 'X' in ONE box only

- 1. In full-time paid work
 - 2. In part-time paid work
 - 3. Registered unemployed
 - 4. Wholly retired from work
 - 5. Looking after the home full-time
 - 6. Other (please specify):
-

37. Which type of organisation do you work for? (If you are not working now, please answer in terms of your LAST job):

Please place an 'X' in ONE box only

- 1. Self-employed
 - 2. A private company or firm
 - 3. A semi-state company
 - 4. The state (*including e.g. civil service, army, gardai*)
 - 5. A local authority
 - 6. A health board / hospital
 - 9. Other (*please specify*):
-

38. What is the full title of your present job? (If you are not working now, please answer in terms of your LAST job)

Please write in

39. If you are not the chief income earner in your household could you write in his or her occupation:

Please write in

40. Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular social class, and if so which one?

1. Upper class
2. Upper middle class
3. Middle class
4. Lower middle class
5. Working class
6. Other (please specify)

41. Could you please indicate to which age group you belong?

1. Under 25
2. 25-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55-64
6. 65 or over

42. Which of these types of educational institution did you LAST attend, FULL-time?

1. National school
2. Second level school
3. RTC or VEC
4. University
5. Other (please specify)

43. Have you obtained any of the following qualifications?

1. Inter cert
2. Junior cert
3. Leaving cert
4. Technical qualification (e.g. Nursing diploma)
5. Teachers training qualification
6. University degree

44. Think of the accommodation where you live now. Do you..?

1. Own it or are buying the property
2. Rent it from the local authority
3. Rent it from a private landlord
4. Live with family or friends
5. Other (please specify)..

45. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion, and if so which one?

1. Catholic
2. Church of Ireland
3. Presbyterian
4. No religion
5. Other (please specify)

46. How often do you attend church?

1. Several times a week
2. Weekly
3. About once a month
4. A few times a year
5. Rarely or never

47. Which daily newspaper do you read MOST?

1. Irish Independent
2. Irish Times
3. The Examiner
4. Evening Herald
5. I don't read a daily newspaper
6. Other daily newspaper (please specify)

SECTION 4

Now we would like to get your views on various issues.

First of all, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
For each statement, please put an X in the appropriate column.

	Strongly Agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly disagree
48.1 Government should intervene more decisively in the economy so as to transfer wealth and resources from the wealthy to the less well off		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
48.2 The use of marijuana should be legalised		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
48.3 There are too many immigrants being let into this country		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
48.4 The trade unions have too much power in this country		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
48.5 Job creation should be a top priority even when this means some damage to the environment		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
48.6 There should be tighter controls on farming practices so as to prevent harm to the environment		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

And now some other questions about various issues:

49. Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion?

1. It should be pushed further	☐
2. It has already gone too far	☐
3. Don't know	☐

50. Should Ireland drop its neutrality, to take part in a common defence policy in the EU (European Union)?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐
3. Don't know	☐

51. With regard to Northern Ireland, should the Irish government of the day have special regard for the views and concerns of Northern nationalists, or for Northern Unionists, or should it try to be even handed as between Northern nationalists and Northern unionists?

1. Special regard for the views and concerns of Northern nationalists
2. Special regard for the views and concerns of Northern unionists
3. Even handed as between Northern nationalists and Northern unionists
4. Don't know

52. Do you feel that the Catholic Church has too much influence on the educational system in this country, about the right amount of influence, or too little influence?

1. Too much influence
2. Too little influence
3. About the right degree of influence
4. Don't know

53. Which of the following phrases comes closest to your own opinion about abortion?

1. It should be allowed for any woman who wants it
2. It should be allowed in special circumstances
3. It should be allowed only where there is threat to the mother's life
4. It should not be allowed in any circumstances
5. Don't know

Now we would like you to consider a number of questions about our political institutions.

Could you tell us, for each of the following, the extent to which you agree or disagree?
For each statement, please put an 'X' in the appropriate column.

	Strongly agree				Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
54. The Dáil should be reformed so as to reduce the power of the government parties and allow the opposition to have greater input into decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. The Seanad should be abolished	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. Local government should have considerably more power than at present	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. Our PR electoral system results in good quality candidates being elected to the Dáil	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. Our PR electoral system forces TDs to spend too much of their time on constituency work instead of national parliamentary work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59. Our PR electoral system should be replaced by one that does not make candidates of the same party compete against each other for votes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

60. In general, do you feel that the Irish political system is working well, or not?

1. Yes, it is working well
2. No, it is not working well

61. What changes, if any, would you recommend to improve the quality of the Irish political system? Please write in:

SECTION 5

People often talk about “the left” and “the right” in politics. In the scales below, the number ‘1’ is used to denote left-wing and the number ‘10’ to denote right-wing. Would you please indicate how you would place the following on such a scale by placing an ‘X’ in the appropriate column.

	Left-wing									Right-wing	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
62. Your own views	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
63. The Fine Gael Party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
64. Fianna Fáil	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
64. Labour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
65. The PDs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Now some questions on internal Fine Gael matters.

66. Do ordinary members of the Fine Gael party have enough say in determining party policy?

1. Yes
2. No

IF NO to Q 66 Which of the following would you suggest to improve matters?
Please indicate, by placing an ‘X’ in the appropriate square

67.1. Regular meetings with party TDs in the constituency to ascertain the views of ordinary party members	☐
67.2. Resolutions at Ard-Fheiseanna to be binding on the party’s TDs	☐
67.3. Regular regional conferences of party members to discuss party policy	☐
67.4. Other (please write in)	☐

68. Do you think Fine Gael should move to the left in its economic policies, move to the right, or stay about where it is?

- 1. Move to the left
- 2. Move to the right
- 3. Stay where it is

69. Should Fine Gael become more liberal on social issues, become less liberal, or stay about where it is?

- 1. Become more liberal
- 2. Become less liberal
- 3. Stay where it is

70. If the next government had to be a coalition, one of these combinations below, which would be your first choice, and which your second, and which your third?

WRITE 1 BESIDE YOUR FIRST CHOICE, AND 2 BESIDE YOUR SECOND

- 1. Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil
- 2. Fine Gael, Labour and the PDs
- 3. Fine Gael and Labour

71. Do you believe that Fine Gael's existing methods of selecting election candidates ensure that Dáil candidates are of as high a calibre as possible?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

72. What additional steps do you feel could be taken by the party that would help to attract better quality candidates to the party?

Write in:

Most election candidates of all parties, including Fine Gael, are men. Several reasons have been put forward to explain this. We would like to know your opinion of the following suggested reasons and ways of changing the balance:

For each statement, please put an X in the appropriate column.

	Strongly agree				Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
73. Women are not as politically ambitious as men are	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
74. Women candidates lose votes for the party and so are not chosen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
75. Attitudes within the party mean that women don't get an equal opportunity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
76. Most women have too many family commitments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

77. Should Fine Gael introduce 'quotas' so that at least a certain minimum percentage, say 33 per cent, of its election candidates are women?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐

78a. Do you feel the Fine Gael organisation could take more steps to attract new members?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐

IF YES to q78a

78b. What is the most important step it should take?

Write in:

79a. Do you believe the Fine Gael organisation makes the best use of the energy and commitment of its existing members?

1. Yes	☐
2. No	☐

IF NO to Q79a

79b. What is the most important way in which it could make better use of them?

Write in:

Next, here are some general statements about politics in Ireland.

Could you tell us, for each of the following, the extent to which you agree or disagree?
For each statement, please put an 'X' in the appropriate column.

	Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly disagree
80.1. The FG party leadership doesn't pay a lot of attention to the views of ordinary party members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
80.2. Parties in general are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
80.3. The only way to be really educated about politics is to be a party activist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
80.4. FG would be more successful if more people like me were elected to the Dail	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
80.5. Attending party meetings can be pretty tiring after a hard day's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

SECTION 7

Thinking of the job of a TD, in your view, how important do you think the following things are for a TD to be doing his or her job properly?

Please mark 1 beside the one you think is most important and 2 besides the next most important.

- 81.1. Playing a role in national politics, by speaking in Dáil debates, helping to make laws, or being active on Dáil committees
- 81.2. Playing a role locally, by keeping in touch with local party members, holding regular constituency clinics, or helping constituents with individual problems
- 81.3. Playing a role for the party, by defending party policy to the press, radio and television, and voting with the party at all times in the Dáil

☐
☐
☐

82. Do you believe that Fine Gael will win more seats than Fianna Fáil at any general election in the next twenty years?

1. Yes
2. No

☐
☐

83. Do you believe that the Labour Party will win more seats than Fine Gael at any general election in the next twenty years?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

84. If the Progressive Democrats wanted to merge with Fine Gael would you welcome this?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

85. If there were to be a merger between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael in the next twenty years would you welcome this?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

86. In which of the following policy areas do you think Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil differ most from one another?

Please put an X in only ONE box

- 1. Northern Ireland
- 2. Taxation
- 3. Europe
- 4. Agriculture
- 5. No real policy differences
- 6. Other (*write in*)

87. Now please tell us in your own words what you feel is the main difference between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael today? (Please write in.)

Please think of a thermometer scale that runs from zero to 99 degrees, where 50 is the neutral or middle point.

If your feelings are cold and unsympathetic, give them a score less than 50; the colder your feelings, the lower the score.

Write ratings of between 10 and 99 like this

Write ratings of under 10 like this

88. William T. Cosgrave

89. Eamon de Valera

90. John A. Costello

91. Seán Lemass

92. Jack Lynch

93 Liam Cosgrave

94. Charles Haughey

95. Garret FitzGerald

96. Albert Reynolds

97. John Bruton

98. Fianna Fáil

99. Fine Gael

100. Labour Party

101. Progressive Democrats

102. Green Party

103. Sinn Féin

104. Bertie Ahern

105. John Hume

106. Mary Harney

107. Gerry Adams

108. David Trimble

109. Ian Paisley

110. Ruairí Quinn

What types of activity at election times do you think are most effective in increasing the vote for a political party? **Please mark 1 beside the one you think is most important and 2 besides the next most important.**

- 111. Personal contact with voters, such as door-to-door canvassing, after-mass meetings, meeting voters at shopping centres etc.
- 112. Local activity such as putting up posters on lampposts, displaying posters in windows or cars, delivering leaflets through the letterbox, and party advertisements in the local press
- 113. National activity such as campaign speeches by party leaders, party political broadcasts on TV, and party advertisements in the national press

114. Finally, what in your opinion are the main issues, policy and/or organisational, that Fine Gael needs to face up to either at the present time or in the future?

This is the end of the questionnaire

Please check that you have answered all the questions

Thank you very much for your help