



Voting Intention Opinion Poll

Nov 2008

Prepared for

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

Must be Included



RED C interviewed a random sample of 1002 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 17th – 19th November 2008. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.



SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 23rd November 2008 Opinion Poll

Support for both major parties rally, but Fine Gael retain lead over Fianna Fail

Today's Sunday Business Post/ RED C tracking poll brings some solace to Fianna Fail, as support recovers somewhat from the record breaking lows seen last month. However Fine Gael will be most happy with the findings, as the party continues to take a greater share of the first preference vote, leaving its share of the vote ahead of Fianna Fail for the second month in a row.

Fine Gael secures 35% of the first preference vote, another record level of support for the party, and an increase of 2% since last month. This is the first poll since the decision by the Progressive Democrats to wind the party down, and it appears that Fine Gael benefits most from this move. Without their own party to support, over half of all those that voted PD at the last election suggest they would vote for Fine Gael instead if there was an election tomorrow. The remainder of past PD voters spread their support among a range of different parties, and as such it is Fine Gael that gains most from the demise of the PD party. Even more positive for the party is the fact that when we analyse the data by those most likely to actually go and vote, Fine Gael secure an even larger share of the first preference vote. Among this key group 36% claim they will vote for the party.

However, Fianna Fail support does also rebound somewhat in today's poll, after the significant 10% falls evident last month. In today's poll they secure 30% of the first preference vote, an increase of 4% over the past four weeks. The record breaking low share for the party recorded last month was always likely to have been somewhat exaggerated, given that the poll was taken exactly in the week following the budget when protest marches by older voters and students took place. Today's results for Fianna Fail are therefore perhaps a more realistic picture of where the party support lies, after the dust has settled somewhat. That is, still down significantly from where they were before the economy began to falter, but with a core support of about 30% of the population. It may also be the case that the gains witnessed in this poll are a response to the more positive measures taken by the Government this week, both in the finance bill and in terms of tax relief on health insurance for those in older age groups. These may have gone some way to redress the balance for the elderly and less well off.



Labour will also be pleased that they have retained much of the gains in first preference vote that they secured last month. The party secures 14% support this month. While this is a fall of 1% since last month, it still leaves the party well ahead of the 10% they had been stuck at for several months. Certainly it appears that the party has done well in the current economic climate and has perhaps been seen as more relevant for some in these more difficult times.

The positive gains for both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail mean that it is inevitable that other parties will have declines in support. This is the case for both Sinn Fein and the Green Party. Sinn Fein's share of the first preference vote falls back by 2% this month, so that the party secures 8% of the first preference share in today's poll. Support for Sinn Fein does fluctuate quite a lot in the polls, but it will be somewhat disappointing for the party after three relatively strong months to fall back again.

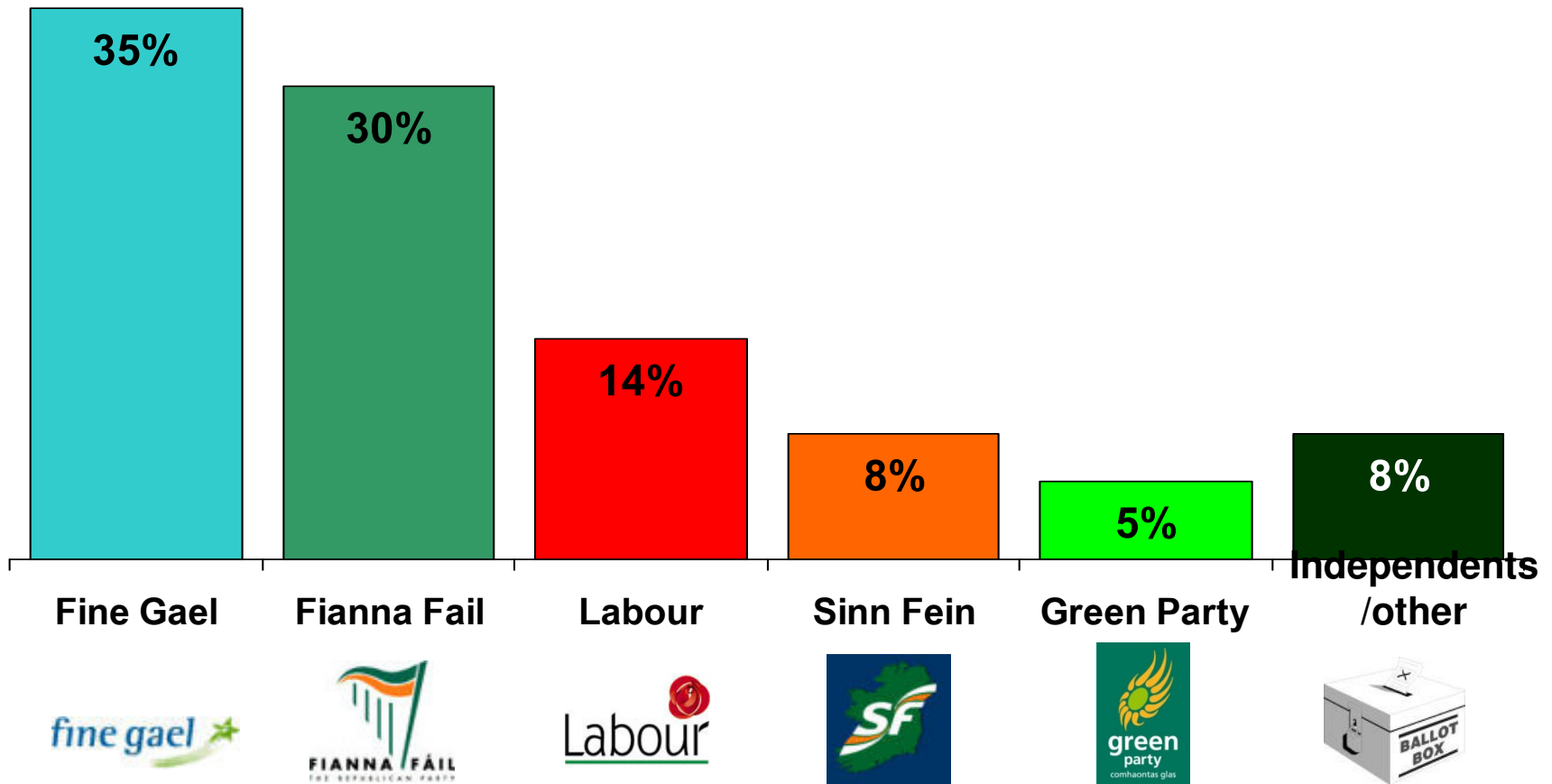
The Green Party also see their support fall back in the poll by 1%, leaving them securing 5% of the vote. In itself a fall of 1% is not significant, but it will be somewhat more worrying for the Green Party as it adds to a downward trend over the last couple of months. At the same time the 5% share they have taken in today's poll perhaps represents their all important core supporters, as it is the same share they achieved at the last election. On this basis it is important that they keep this level of support and work hard to ensure declines do not impact on their core supporter base.

Finally, support for Independent candidates remains at 8% in the poll, the same as they received last month and a positive result for the candidates as it remains their highest share since the last election where their support fell back to 6%.

So after the momentous shifts in voter attitude last month, this poll appears to be a slightly more considered view. It was always unlikely that Fianna Fail support would remain below their core of 30%, the question for the party must be whether they can again persuade those voters outside of this core group that they can deliver the country out of the economic crisis we appear to be in, and restore their share to the mid/ high 30's or if these voters are lost for the immediate future. For Fine Gael and Labour the challenge over the coming months will be to keep enough of their new supporters interested while they remain in opposition, and so hold on to the support they appear to have now in the long term.

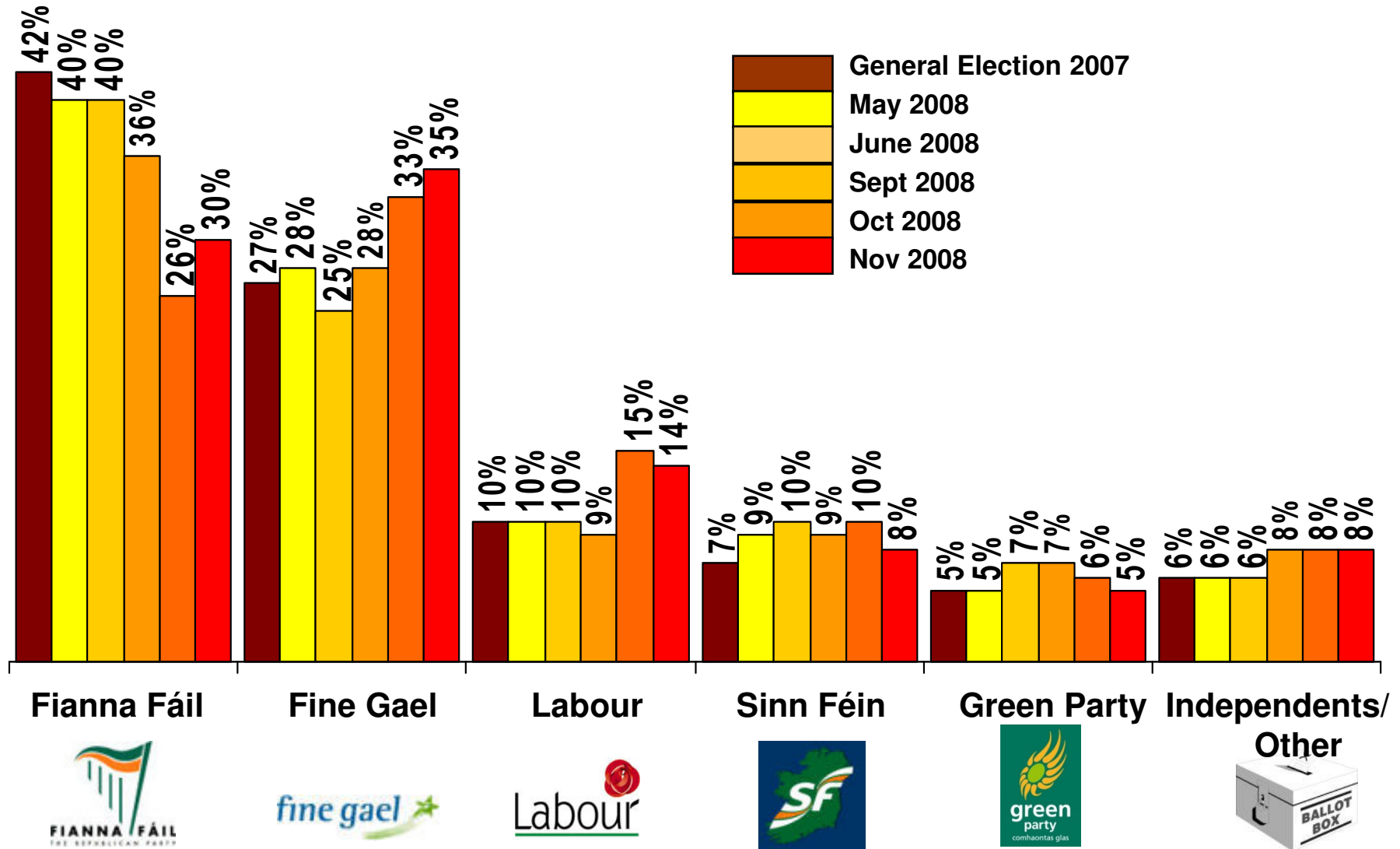
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



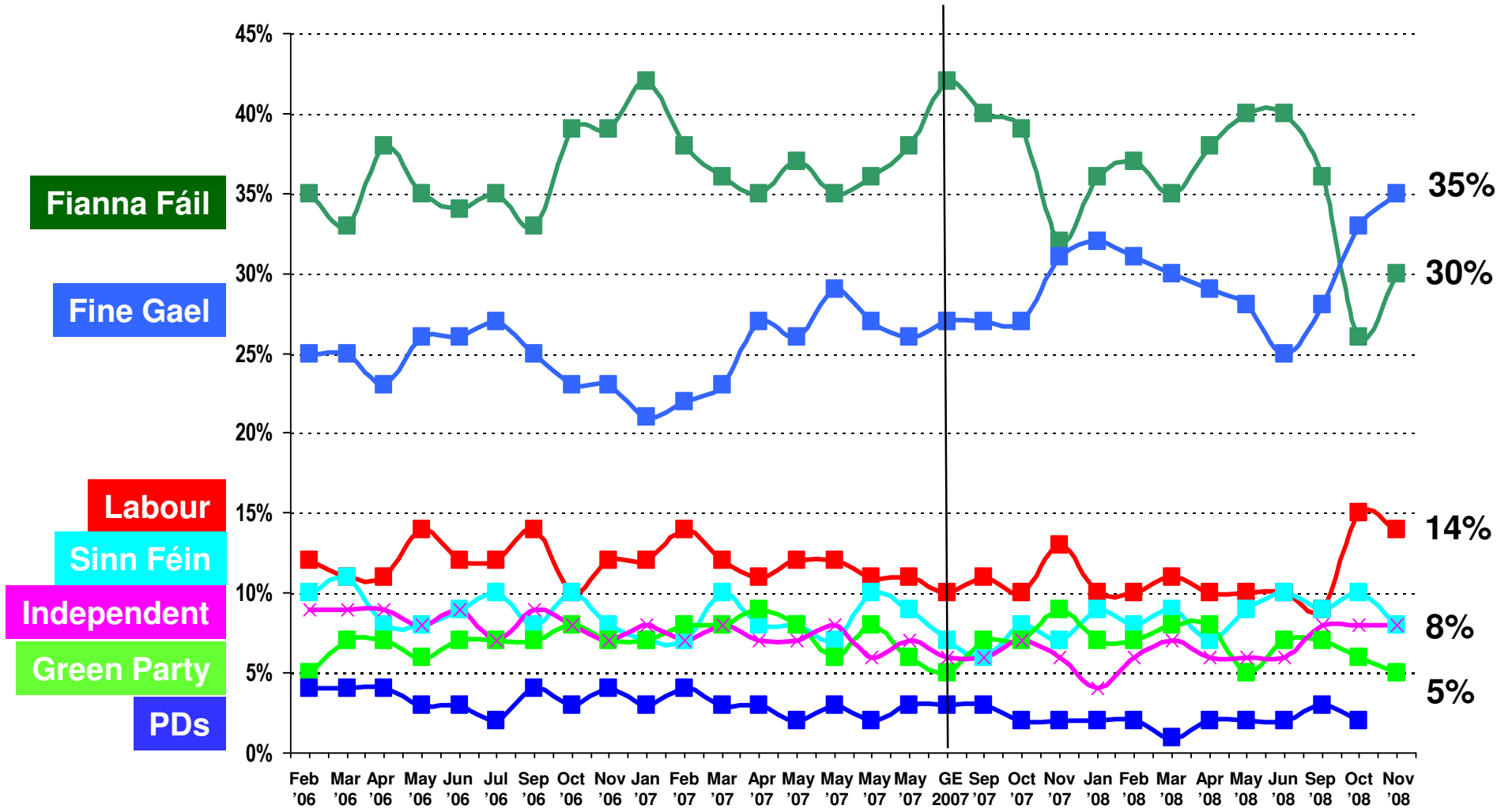
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures Nov 08	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	21	30	42
Fine Gael	27	35	27
Labour	12	14	10
Sinn Féin	8	8	7
Green Party	5	5	5
Independents/Ot hers	7	8	6
Undecided	19		

**CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT BY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE
(those who give a score of 7 or more out of 10, on a scale where 1 = Definitely will not vote and 10 = Definitely will vote)**

	Nov 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	June 2008	May 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Feb 2008	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	2007 Election Result
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	29	26	36	40	39	37	36	38	33	40	42
Fine Gael	36	34	28	25	28	29	30	30	31	28	27
Labour	14	15	9	10	10	11	10	10	13	10	10
Sinn Féin	7	9	9	10	9	7	8	8	7	6	7
Green Party	5	5	7	6	5	7	8	7	8	7	5
Independents / Others	9	9	8	2	6	7	7	6	5	7	6