



General Election Opinion Poll

24th June 2012

Prepared for:

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST
IRELAND'S FINANCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEWSPAPER

Job No: 48911

Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1003 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 18th and 20th June 2012.
- A random digit dial (RDD) method is used to ensure a random selection process of households to be included – this also ensures that ex-directory households are covered.
- Half of the sample are interviewed using an RDD landline sample, with the other half conducted using an RDD mobile phone sample, this ensures 98% coverage of the population reaching landline only households, mobile only households and those with both a landline and a mobile.
- Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults. A further past vote weighting is included that takes the current recall for how people voted at the last election, compares this to the actual results, and weights the data to halfway between the two.
- Vote intention results are based on those who will actually go and vote, using a 10 point scale, where 1 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, those rating 4 to 10 are included as being those who will actually go and vote.
- Finally, some people tell RED C that they intend to vote, and have a good past voting record, but say they don't know who they would vote for or refuse to answer the question. Whenever such people say which party they voted for in the last election, RED C ascribe 50% to the party they voted for previously. We have seen from analysis of past elections that this is the most likely outcome and this reallocation tries to overcome the effect of the “spiral of silence” where voters are do not want to admit who they will vote for.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.



Sinn Fein and the post referendum hangover?

The standout results from the latest Sunday Business Post/ RED C tracking poll, published a month after the Fiscal Treaty Referendum, is the apparent hangover for Sinn Fein. Having spent the last few months in the run up to the referendum, riding high in the polls, the party falls back with a bump this month. Support drops for the party by 3%, leaving them securing a still creditable 16% of the first preference vote. This fall in support appears to have come across the broad range of voters, but particularly men under the age of 44, and those living in more urban areas.

It may seem perhaps surprising therefore, that Labour is not the main beneficiary, given that urban male voters have in the past been quite tightly linked to the party. Labour does consolidate gains made last month, by retaining 15% of the first preference vote, but do not make gains at Sinn Fein's expense. This again suggests the theory that Labour and Sinn Fein have a direct link between the two parties' support is somewhat tenuous.

Instead, the reality is that as Sinn Fein has lost votes, it is Fine Gael and Independent candidates that have gained. Fine Gael increases their share of the vote by 2%, securing 32% of the first preference vote. This returns the party to secure low 30's territory, having flirted with the high 20's for only one month at the start of May. It also means they are some way ahead of the rest of the pack, if not quite back where they were at the last election. At the same time Independent candidates increase their share by 1% in the past month, leaving a combination of Independents (16%), other parties (1%) and Greens (2%) at 19% overall. This appears to suggest that there is a much more fluid movement of floating voters between all four of these parties, rather than only the assumed direct transfer to and from Labour and Sinn Fein.

This is further emphasised by analysing who past supporters of Labour are voting for now. This shows that lapsed Labour voters are as likely to have switched support to Independent candidates as Sinn Fein, and have also moved to Fine Gael. In fact Sinn Fein's surge in support over recent months, was as much off the back of Fine Gael voters switching to the party, as anyone else.



Sinn Fein and the post referendum hangover?

While these small shifts are going on between the four parties, Fianna Fail is consolidating support, which sees them return to be the second largest party in the state. Fianna Fail secures 18% of the first preference vote, just slightly ahead of their General Election result. Support for the party is currently focused in older age groups, and the challenge is to regain acceptability among younger age groups.

Their main source of current gains and “future potential” appears to be Fine Gael voters, and this may help to explain why Fine Gael are doing so well at retaining support, despite all the difficult decisions they are having to make. For many disgruntled Fine Gael voters, the choice is limited, stick with the party or move support back to Fianna Fail. As yet, the idea of returning to Fianna Fail is still simply not acceptable to many, and so Fine Gael benefits from not having an opposition that currently appeals to many of their voters.

The key for any of the opposition parties is therefore to convince that they are a credible alternative for core Fine Gael voters. Without this breakthrough by the other parties, and unless Fine Gael make a serious mess of something; it is likely that Fine Gael will retain support for the foreseeable future, with the other parties trading punches and making small gains and losses in support as voters shift between them.

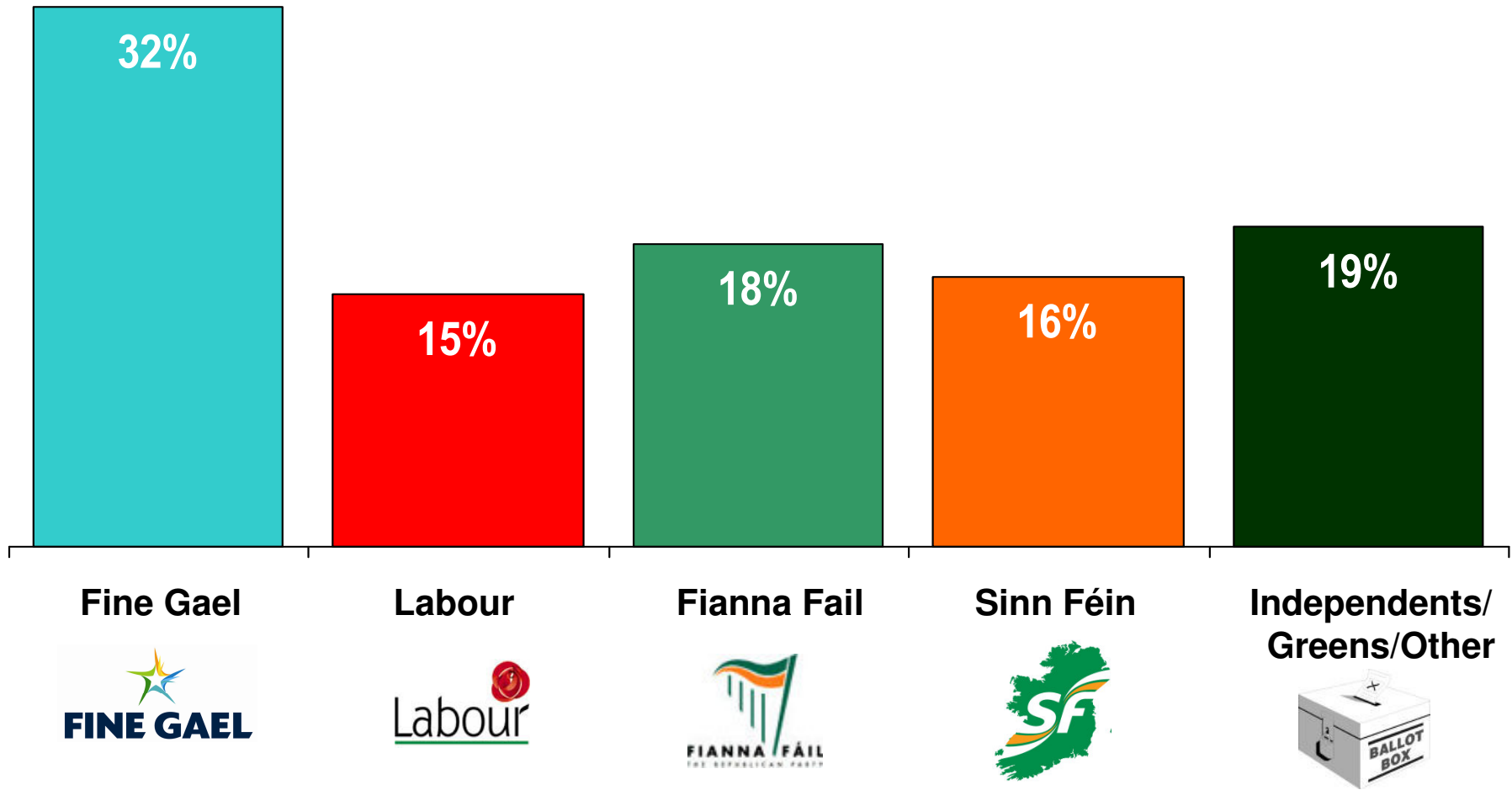
General Election

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

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



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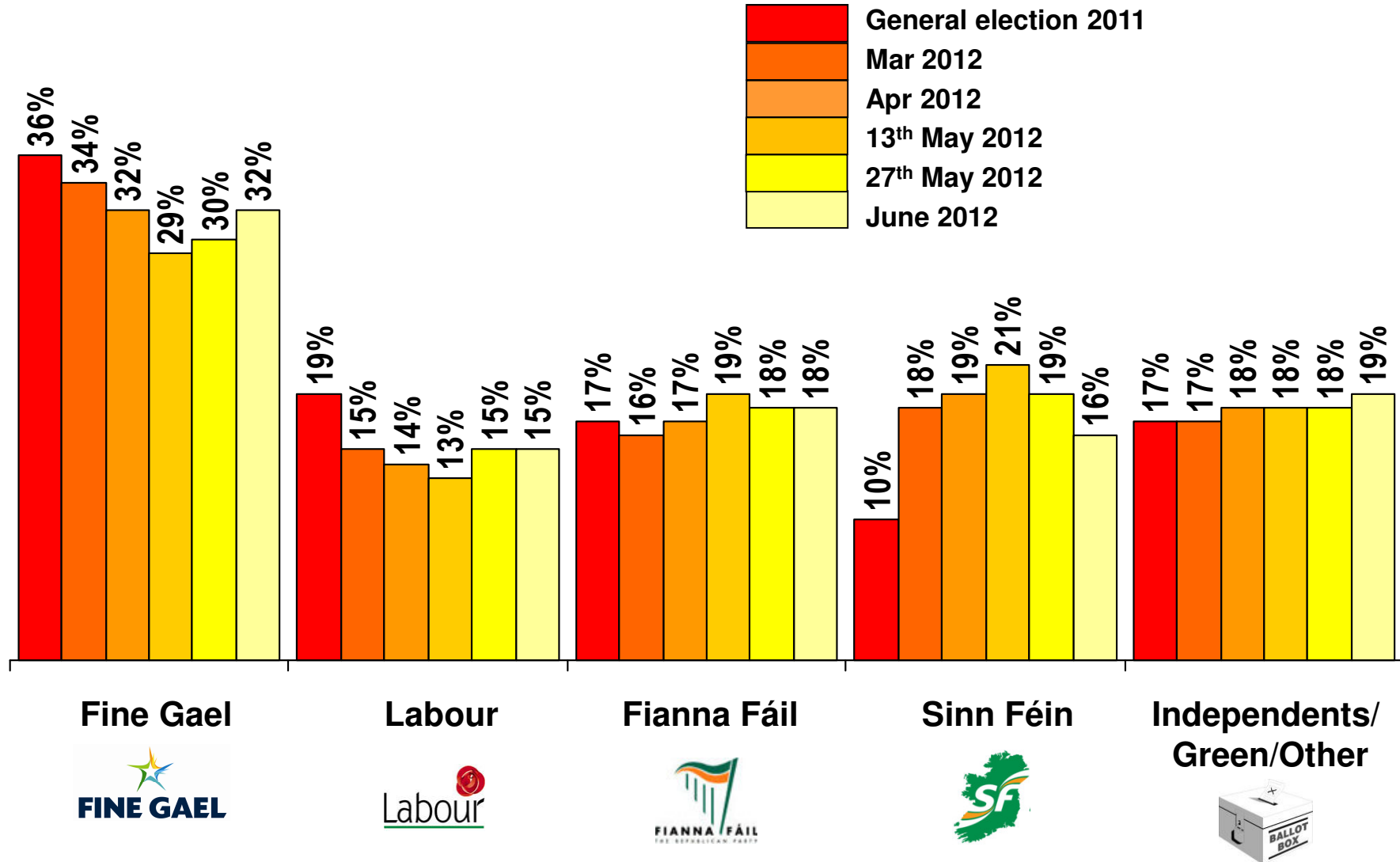


RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION CLARITY

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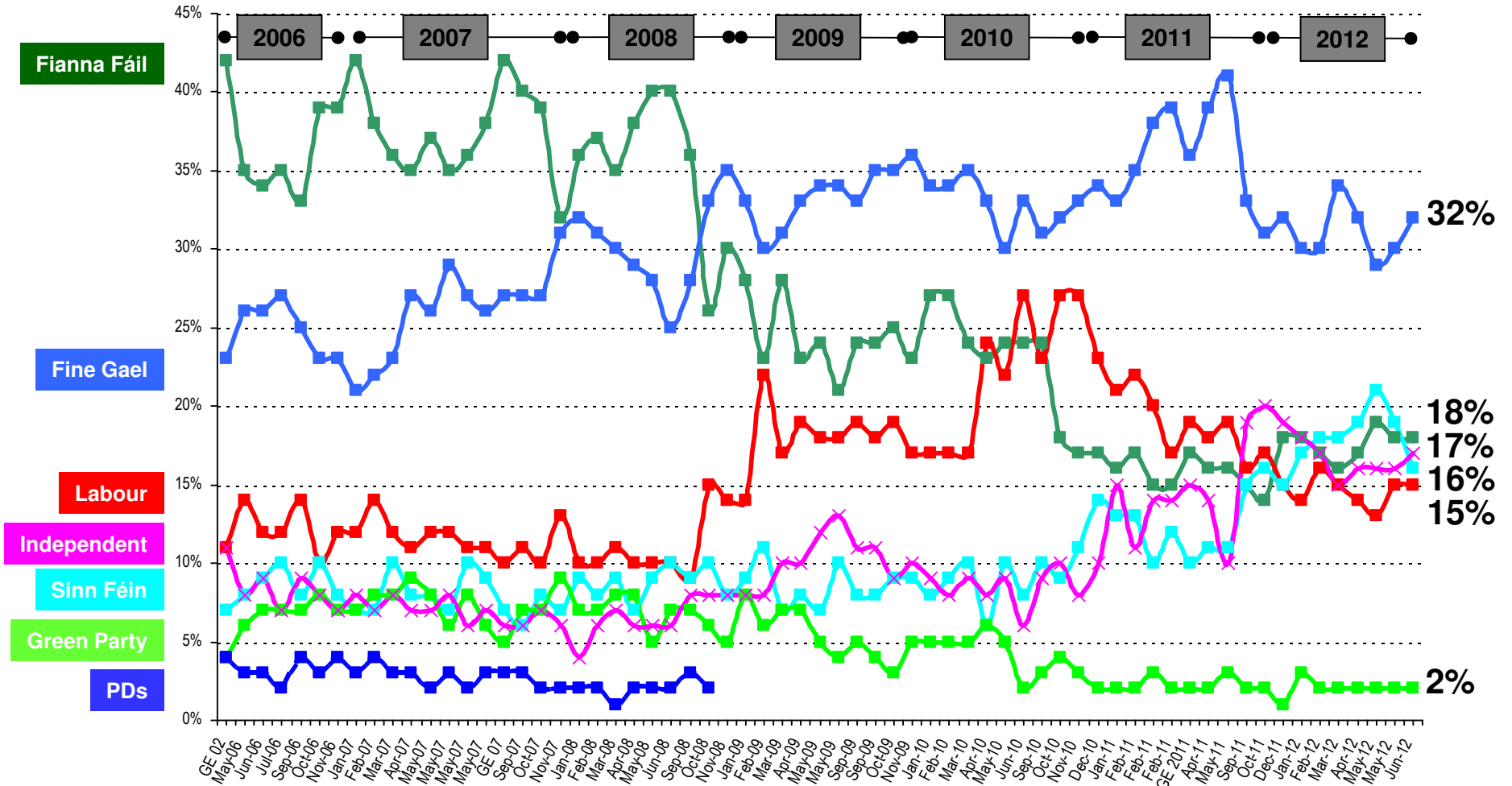


CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE			
	Core figures 24th June 2012	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in 2011	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	25	32	36
Labour	11	15	19
Fianna Fáil	14	18	17
Sinn Féin	13	16	10
Independent candidates	13	16	13
Green Party	2	2	2
Socialist Party	<1	<1	1
Other Party	1	1	1
Undecided	22		

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