



General Election Opinion Poll

27th Jan 2013

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Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,004 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 21st and 23rd January 2013.
- 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.

Is a Spiral of Silence effect building against Labour?



This month's poll is dominated by a heavy swing in support away from Labour, while both Sinn Fein and Fianna Fail made gains. At first glance this may seem to be somewhat at odds with events over the last month as before the Budget, Labour appeared to have stabilised support at 14%. However, this stabilisation in support was helped by the fact that the poll was taken very soon after the recent debate on abortion in Ireland, brought about by the death of Savita Halappanavar. Labour is seen to be relatively aligned to the pro-choice side of the argument, and supporters also tend to be more pro-life in their outlook, as a result they received a lift on the back of the high profile nature of the debate.

The results from today's poll continue the downward trend that we had been witnessing before this debate. However, part of the reason for the decline in this wave, may well also be due to the fact that other parties have performed well.

Sinn Fein has certainly had a "good poll", with support rising by 2% for the party. Whether this is due to the coverage that Gerry Adams has received on his ideas for a national poll on a United Ireland, or for more local on the ground reasons is not clear. It is the case that this swell in support is driven by gains among younger 18-35 year olds, who have at the same time deserted Labour, and among who Sinn Fein is now at a similar level to Fine Gael. It is also important to note that Sinn Fein has overtaken Labour in its core Dublin heartland in today's poll.

Fianna Fail is also steadily making gains at what appears to be Labours expense, securing 21% of the vote in today's poll. Fianna Fail is potentially a greater longer term threat to the government parties, as they have seen a consistent upward trend in support since September last year, whereas Sinn Fein support fluctuates more wildly. At the same time the Fianna Fail brand is still somewhat toxic to many, and this could be hiding further support for the party who are still somewhat "shy" about telling pollsters they are considering going back to them.

The evidence that some voters are "shy" to tell pollsters how they might vote, was first measured by Professor Noelle Neumann in Germany, it is called the Spiral of Silence. The theory is that a party begins to be seen as somewhat negative, and as a result voters are less inclined to admit that they will vote for them in the future to a pollster, despite the fact that they may decide to do so come an election. It was clearly in action in the run up to the 2007 General Election in Ireland, when many people claimed they wouldn't vote for Fianna Fail, but the party still won the election.

Is a Spiral of Silence effect building against Labour? - II



It is likely that this effect may still be under representing the current Fianna Fail vote. While it is clear that people are more inclined to admit they will vote for the party now, there are still some who may be thinking of voting for them, but would not like to admit it yet. It is certainly the case that almost half of all those who are currently undecided in today's poll, voted for Fianna Fail in 2007. Suggesting there is more potential for growth in Fianna Fail support in the months ahead.

The question is now whether this type of shyness is beginning to enter the political sphere for Labour. That is not to suggest that Labour has done anything to be regarded as toxic, in the same way Fianna Fail has been regarded since we lost sovereignty. However there is some evidence that people are less inclined to say they will vote for Labour in the future, or even did vote for them in the past. In order to ensure our sample is not biased we compare how people say they voted at the last election, to the actual result. We then weight to halfway between recalled past vote and the actual result, in order to take into account both faulty recall and biased sampling.

The worry for Labour is that as we have moved further away from the election, less and less people recall having voted for the party. This doesn't matter to our headline figures, because we take account of it in our analysis. But the underlying trend itself is an indicator of support for the party. At first there was a relatively small difference between the recall for Labour and the result, but in the past 6 months the difference has grown.

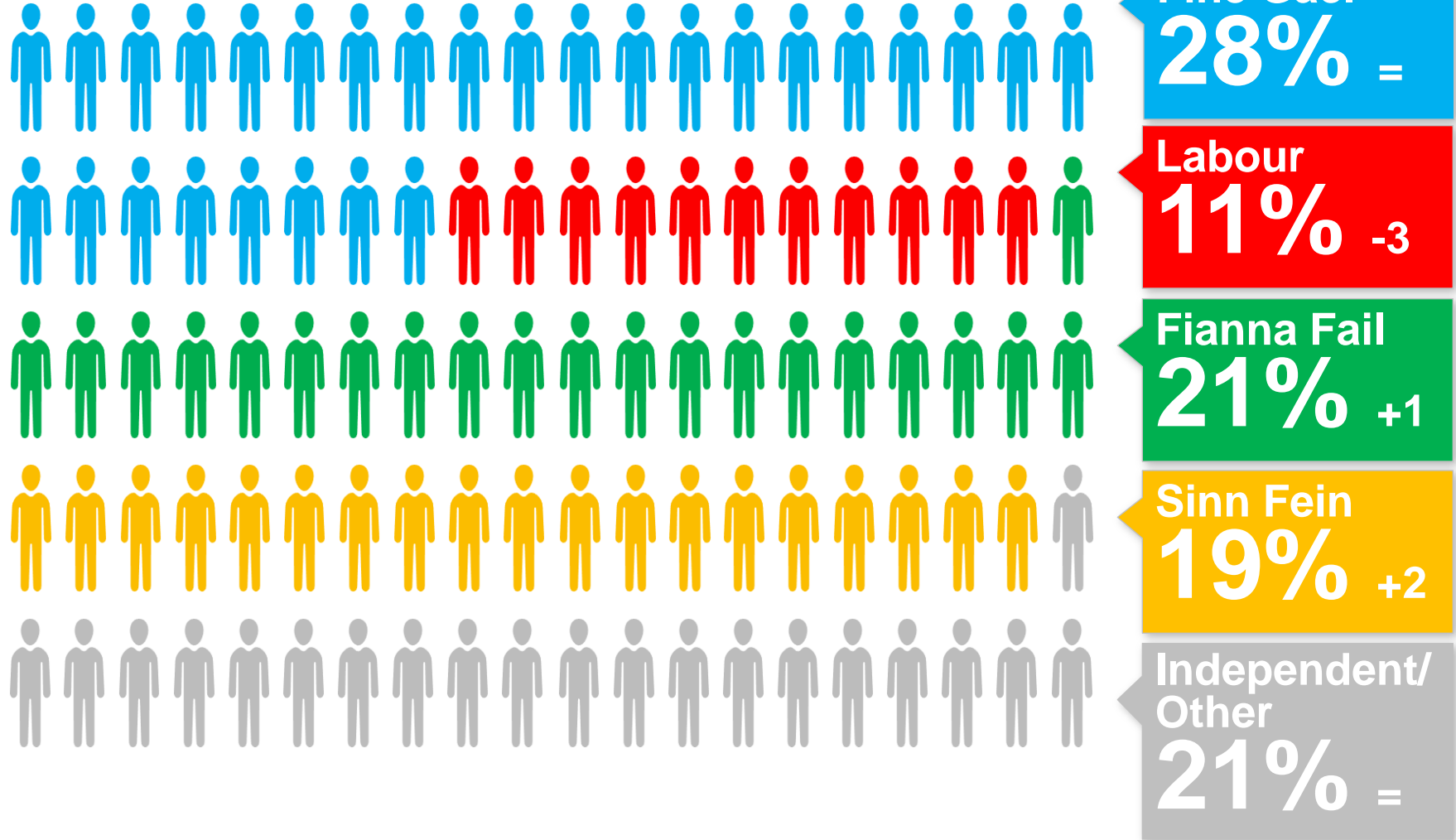
As our sampling has remained the same, and the other parties recall is relatively consistent; this suggests that people are less inclined to even admit they voted Labour in 2011. It is possible evidence that there may in fact be a spiral of silence effect starting for Labour, that we need to monitor carefully in the months ahead.

General Election

First Preference Vote Intention – January 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – January 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote (including undecided))



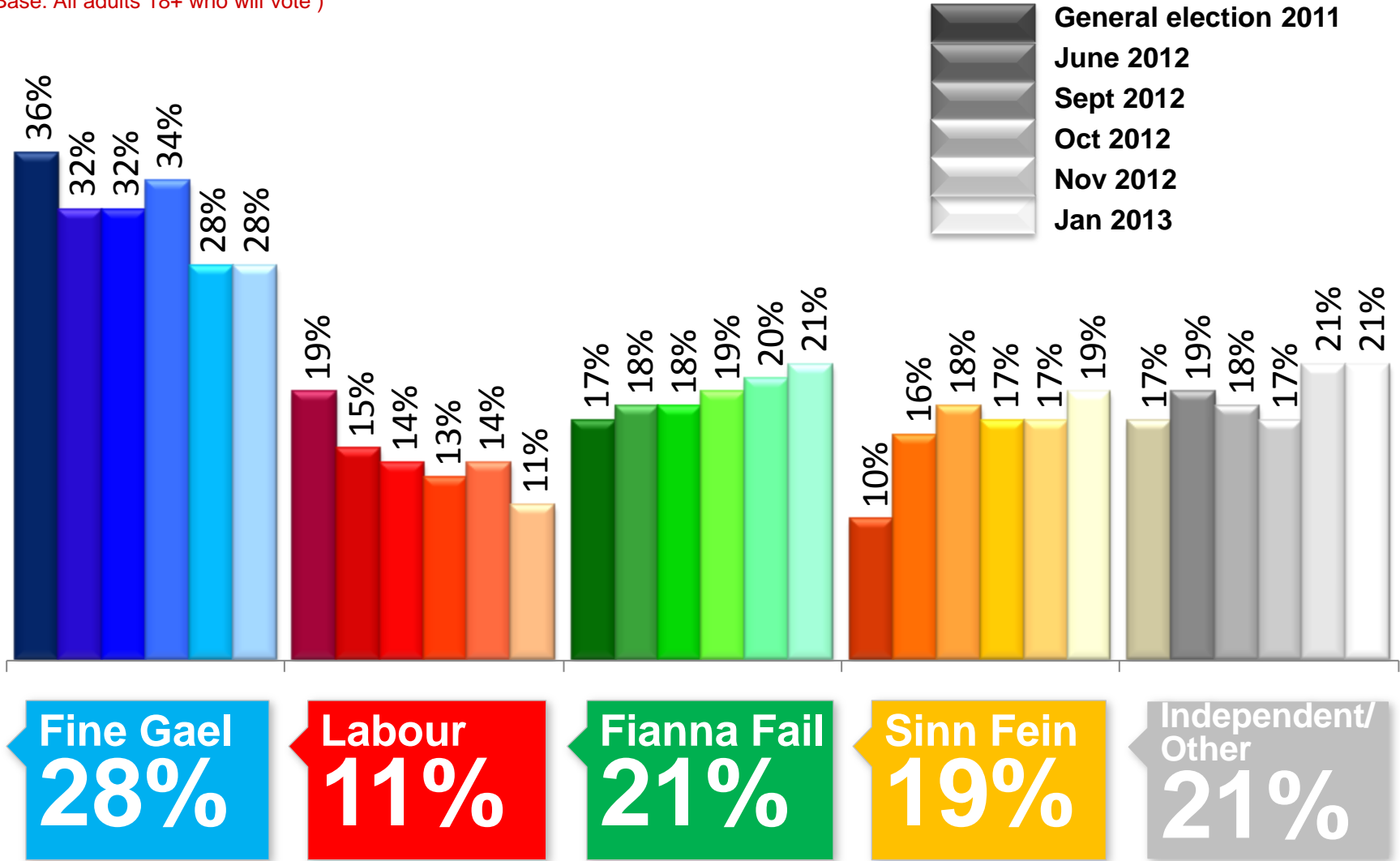
CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE

	Core figures 2 nd December 2012	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in 2011	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	22	28	36
Labour	8	11	19
Fianna Fáil	17	21	17
Sinn Féin	16	19	10
Independent candidates	14	18	13
Green Party	1	2	2
Socialist Party	1	1	1
Other Party	1	0	1
Undecided	20		

First Preference Vote Intention – June 2012 – Jan 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

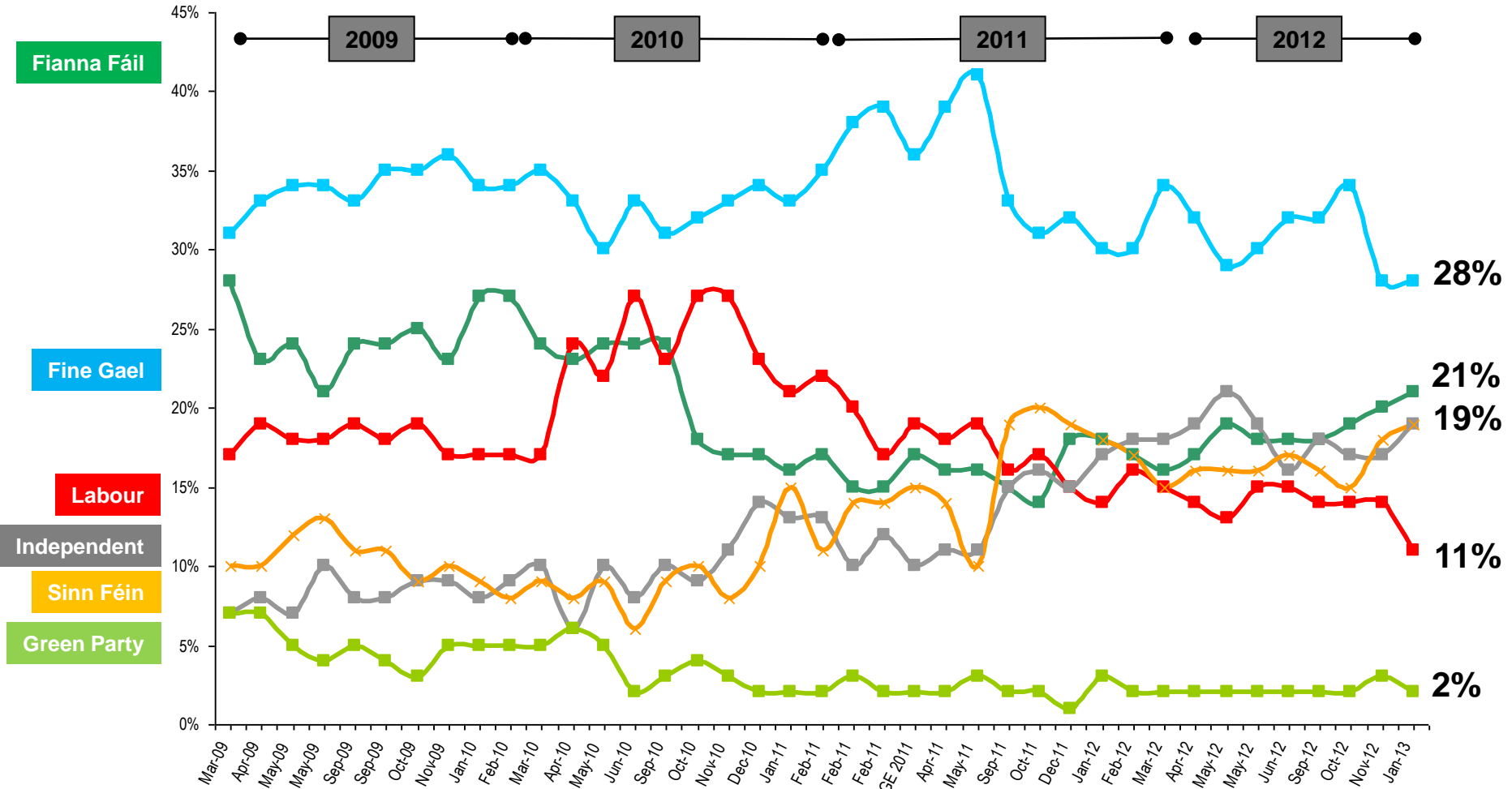
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

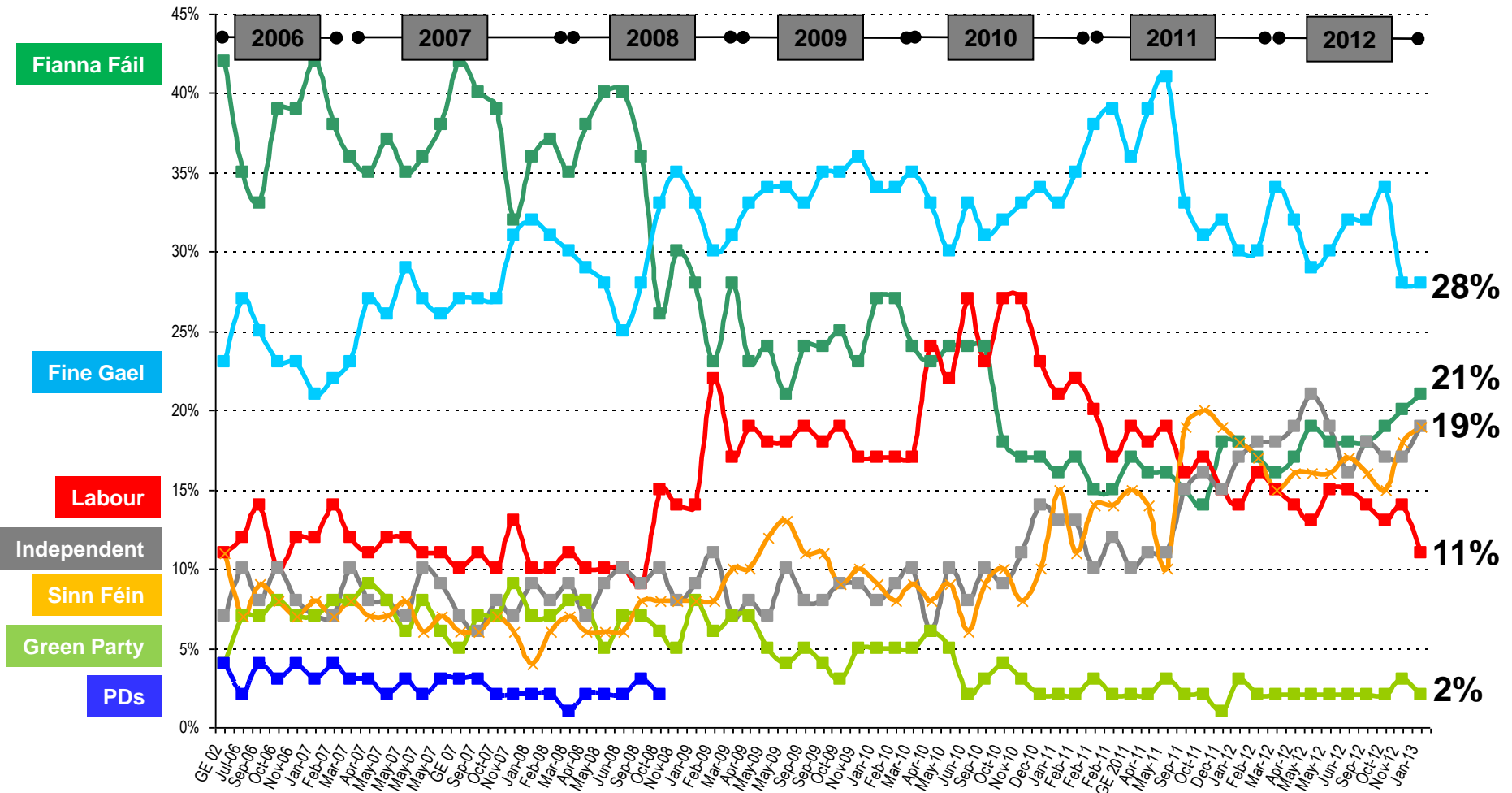
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2006 to 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



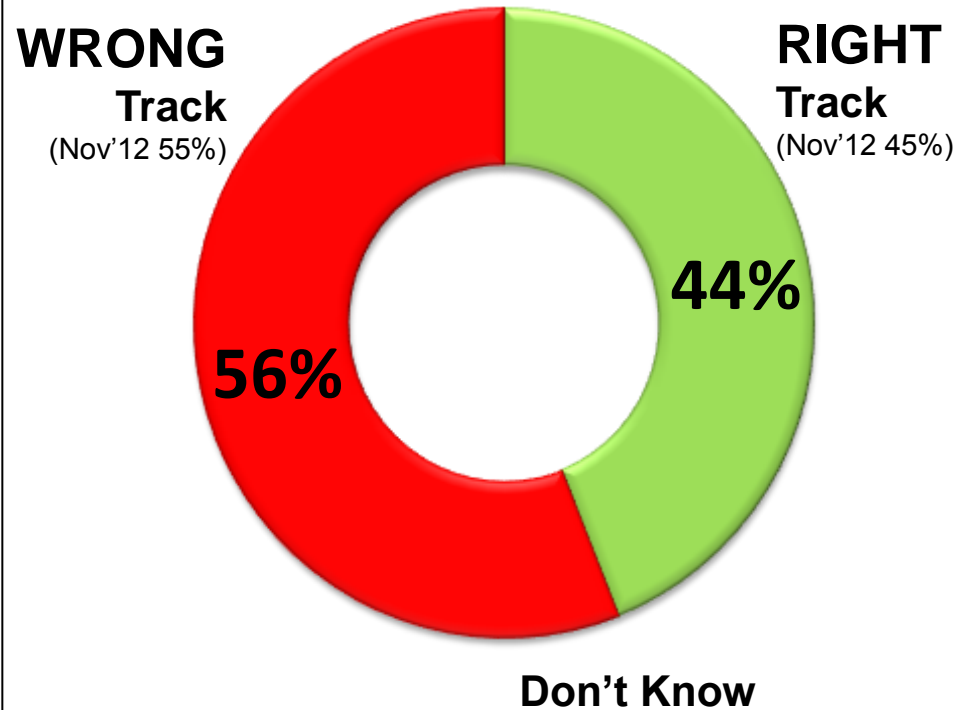
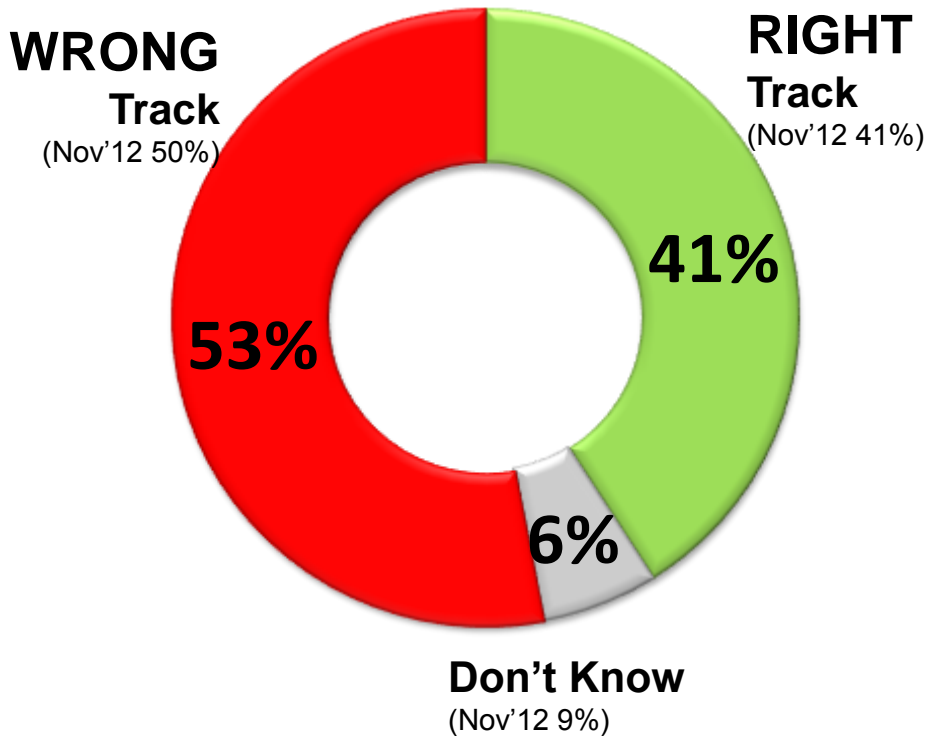
Country & Government on Right Track?

State of the Country – Right Track vs. Wrong Track



All in all, do you think under the current coalition that things are generally heading in the right direction, or do you feel things are on the wrong track?

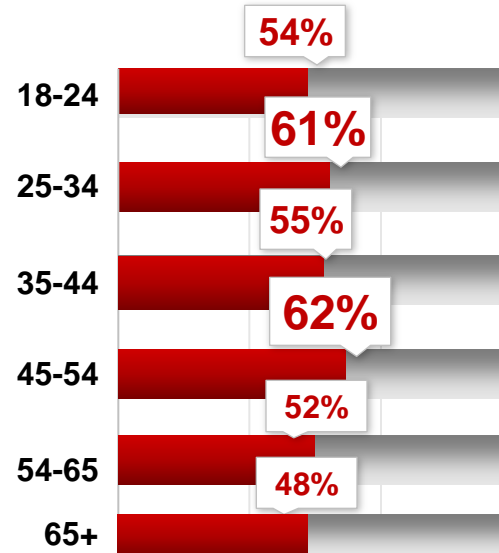
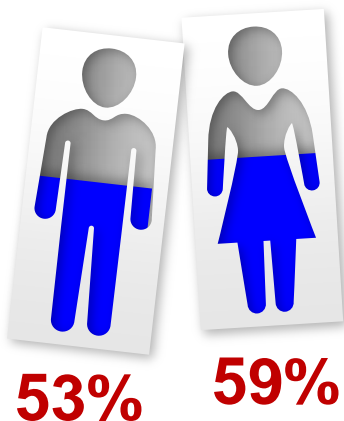
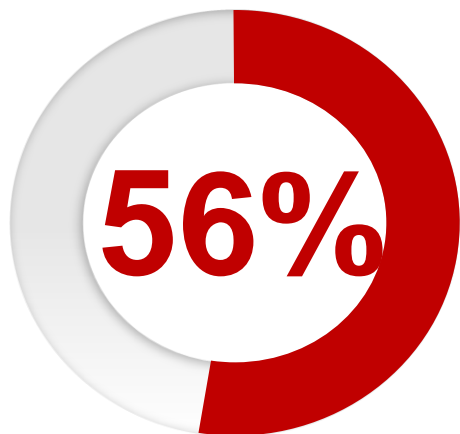
(Base: All Adults 18+)



State of the Country – Wrong Track

All in all, do you think under the current coalition that things are generally heading in the right direction, or do you feel things are on the wrong track?

(Base: All Adults 18+)



Higher Social Grades: **48%**



Lower Social Grades: **65%**



 **39%**

 **62%**

 **63%**

 **86%**

