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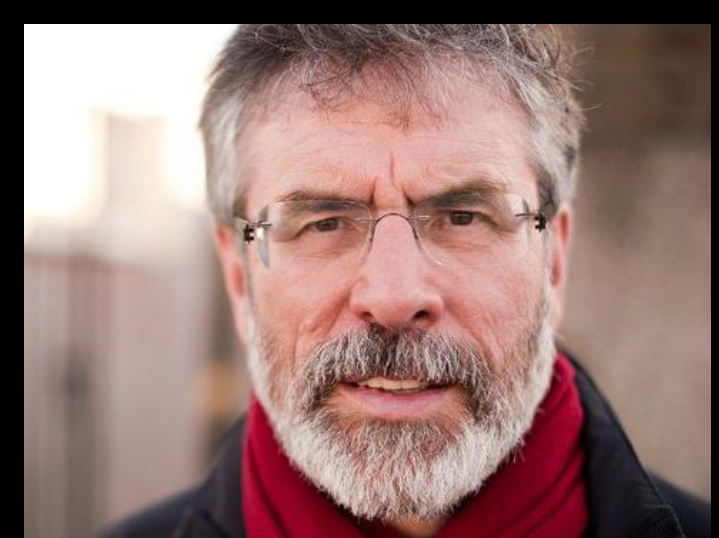
Sunday Times /Behaviour & Attitudes

May 2015
Opinion Poll
1st – 11th May, 2015

Prepared for


THE SUNDAY TIMES

Prepared by Ian McShane
J.6535





Technical Appendix

Technical Appendix

- The results of this opinion poll are based upon a representative sample of 927 eligible Irish voters aged 18 years +.
- As such, the results can be deemed to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork was conducted on an in-home, face-to-face basis over the period 1st – 11th May, 2015.
- The sample was stratified across constituencies at 125 locations in the country with individuals selected for interview by way of Demographic Quotas (age, gender, socio-economic status) in line with Central Statistics Office (CSO) and market research industry population estimates.

Technical Appendix

- The subsequent survey results are weighted to reflect the known demographic profile of Irish adults, utilising the most recently published census population estimates from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).
- Party support levels are subsequently realigned in accordance with a technical adjustment factor, designed to smooth the effects of extreme highs and lows in support levels for individual parties as measured at a single point in time, and taking variable election day turnout levels into account.
- All aspects of the survey, including the Party Support adjustment factor, are implemented in accordance with the technical and ethical guidelines set down by the Association of Irish Market Research Organisations (AIMRO) and the European Society of Opinion & Market Research (ESOMAR).



Chartered Summary

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Government and Party Leader Satisfaction Levels

	12th Feb 2011 (f/w: 31st Jan – 12th Feb, 2011)	24th Aug, 2011 (f/w : 16th – 24th Aug, 2011)	2nd Oct, 2011 (f/w : 20th Sept – 2nd Oct, 2011)	18th Oct, 2011 (f/w : 16th – 18th Oct, 2011)	12th Dec. 2011 (f/w : 7th- 12th Dec, 2011)	20th Feb 2012 (f/w : 15th – 20th Feb. 2012)	17th Apr, 2012 (f/w : 11th – 17th Apr. 2012)	23rd May 2012 (f/w: 18th – 23rd May, 2012)	9th Sept. 2012 (f/w: 4th - 9th Sept 2012)	13th Nov 2012 (f/w: 1st- 13th Nov 2012)	21st Jan 2013 (f/w: 15th – 21 st Jan. 2013)	26 th Mar 2013 (f/w: 11 th - 26 th Mar. 2013)	24 th Jun 2013 (f/w: 11 th – 24 th June 2013)	17 th Sept 2013 (f/w (f/w 10 th Sept – 17 th Sept 2013)	15 th Dec 2013 (f/w 3 rd – 15 th Dec 2013)	19 th Feb 2014 (f/w: 11 th – 19 th Feb 2014)	16 th Apr 2014 (f/w: 6 th – 16 th Apr 2014)	13 th Aug 2014 (f/w: 4 th – 13 th Aug 2014)	22 nd Oct. (f/w: 14 th – 22 nd Oct. 2014)	21 st Dec (f/w: 9 th – 17 th Dec 2014)	11 th Mar (f/w: 2 nd Mar – 11 th March 2015)	** 11 th May (f/w: 1 st – 11 th May 2015)
The Government	5%	42%	34%	36%	26%	26%	29%	31%	24%	26%	22%	25%	24%	24%	35%	31%	28%	27%	29%	29%	35%	30%
Micheál Martin	43%	40%	31%	36%	40%	33%	34%	41%	34%	42%	48%	44%	43%	37%	43%	43%	45%	39%	37%	39%	38%	35%
Enda Kenny	40%	62%	51%	58%	44%	41%	47%	42%	38%	41%	39%	39%	37%	34%	44%	41%	40%	35%	29%	28%	32%	29%
Eamon/ Gilmore Joan Burton	55%	52%	43%	46%	35%	34%	37%	32%	34%	29%	26%	29%	26%	26%	32%	31%	37%	45%*	41%	34%	37%	35%
Gerry Adams	40%	48%	50%	50%	48%	46%	43%	42%	39%	40%	43%	45%	43%	41%	33%	39%	48%	47%	40%	34%	37%	33%
Eamon Ryan	-	34%	30%	30%	30%	25%	29%	29%	27%	27%	30%	29%	30%	30%	30%	31%	33%	37%	33%	33%	33%	32%

***Inclusion of Joan Burton as Tánaiste**

**** Face-to-face surveying employed**



Q.2

Would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the manner in which the Government is running the country?

Q.3

Would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way (.....) is doing his/her job as (.....)?

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Core Party Support Levels

	12 th Feb. 2011 (f/w: 31 st Jan – 12 th Feb, 2011)	24 th Aug, 2011 (f/w: 16 th – 24 th Aug, 2011)	2 nd Oct, 2011 (f/w: 20 th Sept – 2 nd Oct, 2011)	18 th Oct, 2011 (f/w: 16 th – 18 th Oct, 2011)	12 th Dec. 2011 (f/w : 7 th – 12 th Dec, 2011)	20 th Feb. 2012 (f/w: 15 th – 20 th Feb. 2012)	17 th Apr, 2012 (f/w: 11 th – 17 th Apr. 2012)	23 rd May 2012 (f/w: 18 th – 23 rd May, 2012)	9 th Sept. 2012 (f/w: 4 th – 9 th Sept 2012)	13 th Nov 2012 (f/w: 1 st – 13 th Nov 2012)	21 st Jan 2013 (f/w: 15 th – 21 st Jan. 2013)	26 th Mar 2013 (f/w: 11 th – 26 th Mar. 2013)	24 th Jun 2013 (f/w: 11 th – 24 th June 2013)	17 th Sept 2013 (f/w 10 th Sept – 17 th Sept 2013)	15 th Dec 2013 (f/w 3 rd – 15 th Dec 2013)	19 th Feb 2014 (f/w: 11 th – 19 th Feb 2014)	16 th Apr 2014 (f/w: 6 th – 16 th Apr 2014)	15 th May 2014 (f/w: 3 rd – 15 th May 2014)	13 th Aug 2014 (f/w: 4 th – 13 th Aug 2014)	22 nd Oct. (f/w: 14 th – 22 nd Oct. 2014)	21 st Dec (f/w: 9 th – 17 th Dec 2014)	11 th Mar (f/w: 2 nd Mar – 11 th March 2015)	* 11 th May (f/w: 1 st – 11 th May 2015)
Fianna Fáil	11%	12%	11%	11%	15%	11%	12%	12%	12%	16%	19%	19%	19%	15%	19%	16%	17%	16%	15%	14%	14%	14%	12%
Fine Gael	26%	35%	26%	27%	22%	23%	22%	24%	23%	23%	17%	19%	19%	19%	21%	22%	18%	20%	18%	17%	17%	19%	19%
Labour	17%	9%	10%	11%	8%	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%	7%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Sinn Féin	10%	10%	12%	14%	15%	18%	14%	17%	13%	12%	13%	13%	13%	14%	11%	16%	16%	15%	22%	17%	20%	19%	17%
Green Party	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Independents /Others	10%	10%	10%	9%	12%	11%	12%	10%	12%	11%	9%	15%	12%	14%	13%	14%	18%	16%	17%	21%	23%	17%	21%
Undecided	25%	22%	28%	27%	27%	30%	30%	28%	30%	29%	33%	27%	29%	30%	28%	24%	24%	25%	19%	24%	22%	24%	25%

* Face-to-face surveying employed



Q.7

If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Party Support Levels (Excluding Undecideds - Unadjusted)

	12 th Feb, 2011 (f/w: 31 st Jan – 12 th Feb, 2011)	General Election Result Feb 25 th	24 th Aug, 2011 (f/w: 16 th – 24 th Aug, 2011)	2 nd Oct, 2011 (f/w: 20 th – 2 nd Oct, 2011)	18 th Oct, 2011 (f/w: 16 th – 18 th Oct, 2011)	12 th Dec, 2011 (f/w: 7 th – 12 th Dec, 2011)	20 th Feb, 2012 (f/w: 15 th – 20 th Feb, 2012)	17 th Apr, 2012 (f/w: 11 th – 17 th Apr, 2012)	23 rd May, 2012 (f/w: 18 th – 23 rd May, 2012)	9 th Sept, 2012 (f/w: 4 th – 9 th Sept, 2012)	13 th Nov, 2012 (f/w: 1 st – 13 th Nov, 2012)	21 st Jan, 2013 (f/w: 15 th – 21 st Jan, 2013)	26 th Mar, 2013 (f/w: 11 th – 26 th Mar, 2013)	24 th Jun, 2013 (f/w: 11 th – 24 th June, 2013)	17 th Sept, 2013 (f/w: 10 th – 17 th Sept, 2013)	15 th Dec, 2013 (f/w: 3 rd – 15 th Dec, 2013)	19 th Feb, 2014 (f/w: 11 th – 19 th Feb, 2014)	16 th Apr, 2014 (f/w: 6 th – 16 th Apr, 2014)	15 th May, 2014 (f/w: 3 rd – 15 th May, 2014)	13 th Aug, 2014 (f/w: 4 th – 13 th Aug, 2014)	22 nd Oct, 2014 (f/w: 14 th – 22 nd Oct, 2014)	21 st Dec, 2014 (f/w: 9 th – 21 st Dec, 2014)	11 th Mar, 2015 (f/w: 2 nd – 11 th March, 2015)	* 11 th May (f/w: 1 st – 11 th May, 2015)
Fianna Fáil	15%	17%	15%	15%	15%	20%	16%	17%	17%	18%	23%	28%	27%	27%	21%	27%	21%	22%	22%	18%	19%	17%	19%	15%
Fine Gael	34%	36%	44%	36%	37%	30%	32%	32%	33%	33%	32%	26%	26%	26%	27%	29%	28%	23%	27%	22%	23%	21%	25%	25%
Labour	23%	19%	12%	14%	15%	11%	10%	10%	11%	11%	10%	10%	6%	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	5%	5%	7%	7%
Sinn Féin	14%	10%	13%	17%	19%	21%	25%	20%	23%	19%	17%	20%	17%	19%	20%	15%	21%	21%	20%	27%	23%	25%	25%	22%
Green Party	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	3%	2%	5%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%
Independent / Others	14%	16%	12%	13%	13%	15%	15%	17%	14%	17%	16%	14%	21%	17%	20%	19%	18%	23%	22%	21%	28%	30%	22%	28%

* **Face-to-face surveying employed**



Q.7

If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?

Party Support Adjustment Factor: Technical Note

- Predicting election results on the basis of poll data is not an exact science. All the evidence shows that support for individual parties can swing dramatically in the period between elections- very often outside the bounds of historic election results.
- What to do in these circumstances? Most polling companies in Britain and Ireland publish their raw survey results as an index of fluctuations in the emotional mood of voters. They also build in an adjustment based on a number of factors. Where we have reports of how people voted in the last general election as well as how they intend to vote in the next one we can use these data to model the likely level of swing from the last election results.
- We then add back in the forecasts of voters who have not voted last time or do not answer that particular question.
- Finally we take into account each individuals stated likelihood of voting in a forthcoming General Election.
- This is the basis of the adjusted voting forecast in Behaviour & Attitudes polls.

Party Support Levels (Excluding Undecided - Adjusted)

	2nd Oct, 2011 (f/w: 20th Sept - 2nd Oct, 2011)	18th Oct, 2011 (f/w: 16th - 18th Oct, 2011)	12th Dec, 2011 (f/w: 7th-12th Dec, 2011)	20th Feb, 2012 (f/w: 15th - 20th Feb, 2012)	17th Apr, 2012 (f/w: 11th - 17th Apr, 2012)	23rd May, 2012 (f/w: 18th - 23rd May, 2012)	9th Sept, 2012 (f/w: 4th - 9th Sept, 2012)	13th Nov, 2012 (f/w: 1st-13th Nov, 2012)	21st Jan, 2013 (f/w: 15th - 21st Jan, 2013)	26th Mar, 2013 (f/w: 11th - 26th Mar, 2013)	24th Jun, 2013 (f/w: 11th - 24th June, 2013)	17th Sept, 2013 (f/w: 10th Sept - 17th Sept, 2013)	15th Dec, 2013 (f/w: 3rd - 15th Dec, 2013)	19th Feb, 2014 (f/w: 11th - 19th Feb, 2014)	16th Apr, 2014 (f/w: 6th - 16th Apr, 2014)	15th May, 2014 (f/w: 3rd - 15th May, 2014)	13th Aug, 2014 (f/w: 4th - 13th Aug, 2014)	22nd Oct, 2014 (f/w: 14th - 22nd Oct, 2014)	21st Dec, 2014 (f/w: 9th - 21st Dec, 2014)	11th Mar, 2015 (f/w: 2nd Mar - 11th March, 2015)	* 11th May, 2015 (f/w: 1st - 11th May, 2015)
Fianna Fáil	16%	14%	18%	16%	15%	16%	16%	22%	24%	23%	24%	21%	21%	19%	20%	19%	18%	18%	18%	18%	17%
Fine Gael	34%	35%	29%	33%	33%	33%	31%	30%	26%	27%	27%	25%	30%	30%	21%	26%	24%	25%	24%	27%	27%
Labour	16%	16%	12%	13%	14%	14%	14%	12%	11%	7%	7%	11%	11%	9%	9%	7%	14%	9%	5%	9%	8%
Sinn Féin	14%	17%	19%	20%	16%	17%	18%	14%	19%	15%	16%	18%	15%	18%	20%	21%	19%	19%	22%	19%	20%
Green Party	3%	1%	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%
Independents / Others	17%	16%	18%	16%	18%	18%	19%	19%	18%	25%	23%	23%	21%	21%	26%	24%	22%	25%	29%	23%	26%

*** Face-to-face surveying employed**

- Adjusted figures based on:
 - ❖ All who state they would definitely vote
 - ❖ Weighting of those respondents who give a definite answer as to who they would vote for in a general election and who they voted for in the last election, a quarter of the way between stated voting intention and the result of the last election.
 - ❖ Making no adjustment to stated voting intention of those who do not indicate how they voted in last election.



Q.7

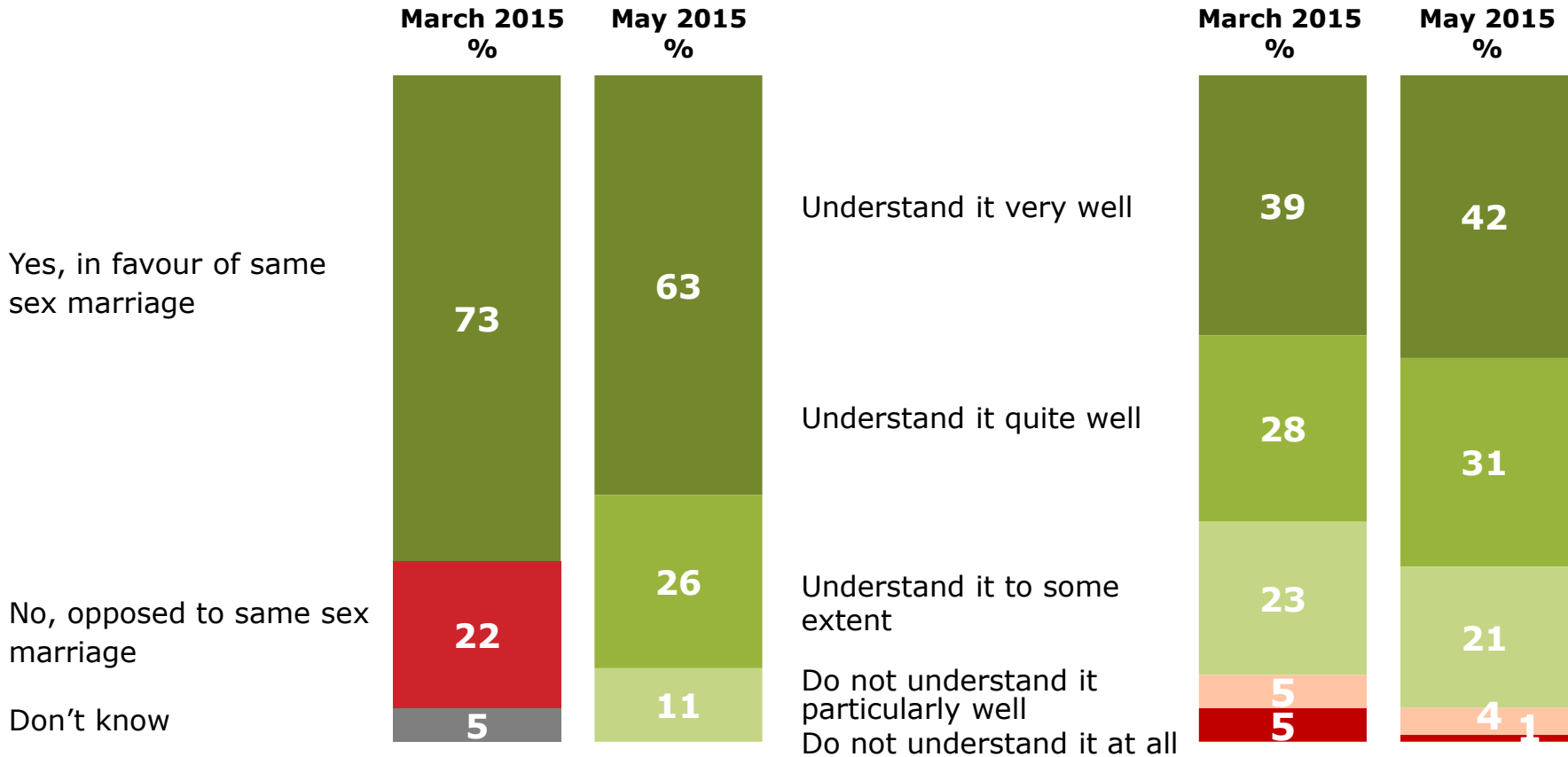
If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?

Likely Voting Intentions and Level of Understanding

- Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage

Voting Intention

Level of understanding



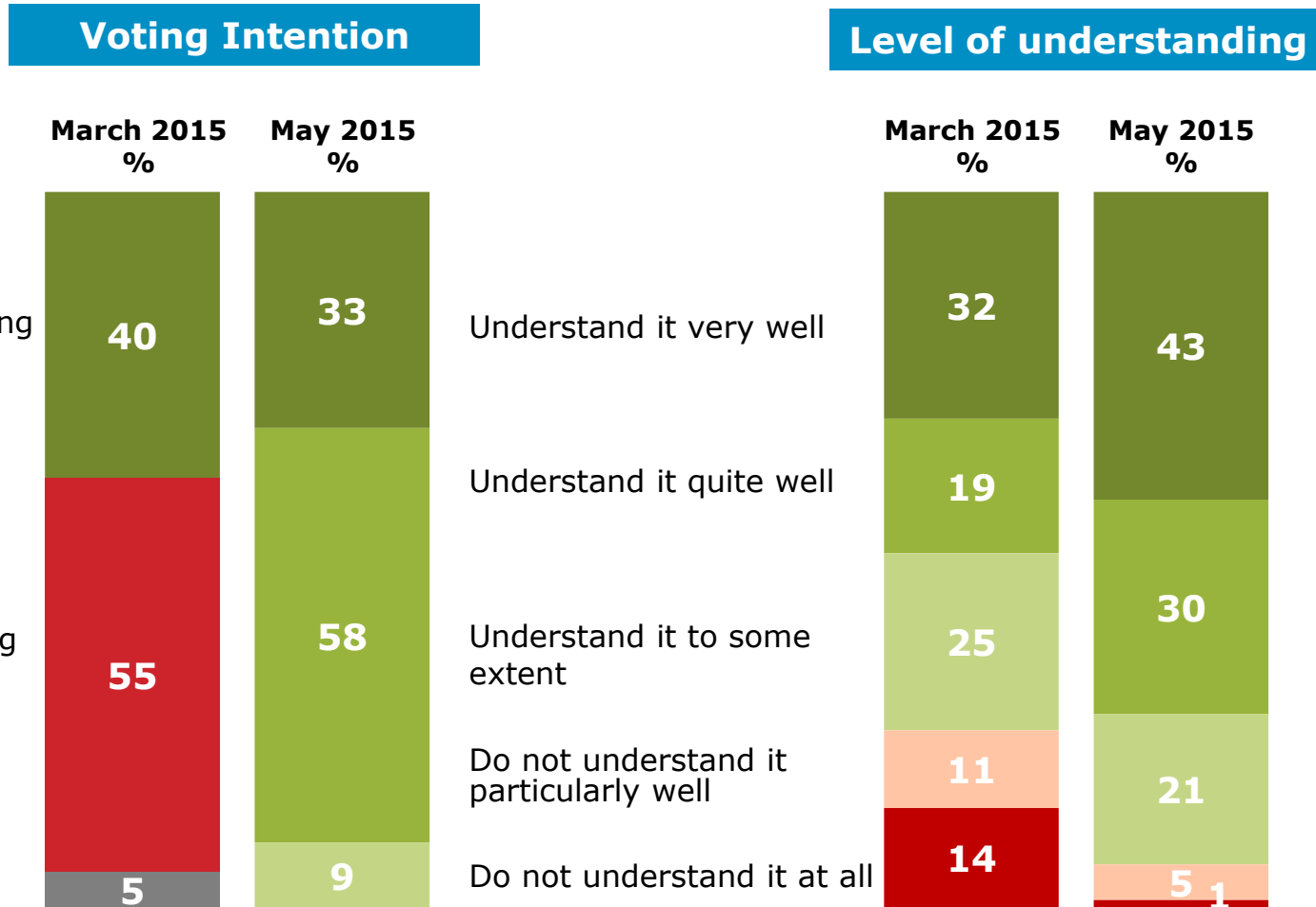
Q.8 As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

Q.9 On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the same sex marriage referendum is about?



Likely Voting Intentions and Level of Understanding

- Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland



Q.10

A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?

Q.11

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the Presidential Candidate Age Referendum is about?

Likely voting intentions x Demographics

	Total	Gender		Age			Class			Region				Area	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	C2DE	F	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Ulster	Urban	Rural
Base:	927	454	473	274	363	290	419	455	53	274	232	252	169	602	325
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage

Yes, in favour of same sex marriage	63	57	68	79	67	39	68	60	45	64	64	58	66	64	61
No, opposed to same sex marriage	26	30	22	12	22	47	21	29	34	26	26	32	18	25	28
Don't know	11	13	10	9	11	14	10	11	21	10	10	10	16	11	11

Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland

Yes, in favour of reducing age	33	36	31	54	29	16	32	35	24	29	37	33	35	34	32
No, opposed to reducing age	58	56	61	37	61	77	58	58	58	67	51	60	52	59	57
Don't know	9	9	9	9	10	7	10	7	18	5	12	7	13	8	11

Q.8

As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

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A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?

Likely voting intentions x Party Support

Base: All Eligible Voters	Total	Party Support						
		Fianna Fail	Fine Gael	Labour	Green Party	Sinn Fein	Indep endent/ Others	Would not/ DK
Base:	927	109	181	46	14	154	185	226
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage								
Yes, in favour of same sex marriage	63	53	60	69	100	68	61	62
No, opposed to same sex marriage	26	41	28	18	-	24	30	21
Don't know	11	6	12	13	-	8	9	17
Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland								
Yes, in favour of reducing age	33	31	24	23	63	38	26	41
No, opposed to reducing age	58	64	68	73	27	50	67	47
Don't know	9	6	8	4	10	11	6	12

Q.8

As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

Q.10

A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?



How well do you understand the Referendum x Demographics

	Total	Gender		Age			Class			Region				Area	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	C2DE	F	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Ulster	Urban	Rural
Base:	927	454	473	274	363	290	419	455	53	274	232	252	169	602	325
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage

Understand it very well	42	41	43	46	44	35	43	41	45	43	42	49	31	41	43
Understand it quite well	31	32	30	30	32	31	34	31	15	35	33	21	38	35	25
Understand it to some extent	21	22	20	21	18	26	19	21	36	18	21	23	24	18	27
Do not understand it particularly well	4	3	5	2	5	5	3	5	4	4	3	4	7	5	2
Do not understand it at all	1	2	1	2	0	3	1	2	1	0	1	4	1	1	2

Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland

Understand it very well	43	46	39	44	42	42	46	41	37	43	40	50	35	44	40
Understand it quite well	30	27	33	27	34	28	29	32	23	31	29	26	36	32	27
Understand it to some extent	21	22	21	22	18	25	21	20	33	21	24	17	24	19	26
Do not understand it particularly well	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	6	5	6	4	4	5	5
Do not understand it at all	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1

Q.9

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the same sex marriage referendum is about?

Q.11

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the Presidential Candidate Age Referendum is about?

How well do you understand the Referendum x Party Support

Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage

Base: All Eligible Voters	Total	Party Support						
		Fianna Fail	Fine Gael	Labour	Green Party	Sinn Fein	Indep endent/ Others	Would not/ DK
Base:	927	109	181	46	14	154	185	226
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage								
Understand it very well	42	40	47	30	56	55	43	31
Understand it quite well	31	30	32	42	34	18	31	38
Understand it to some extent	21	22	18	23	4	24	21	23
Do not understand it particularly well	4	6	3	1	6	3	5	5
Do not understand it at all	1	2	1	3	-	-	0	3
Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland								
Understand it very well	43	44	50	41	45	49	46	30
Understand it quite well	30	30	28	34	36	22	34	32
Understand it to some extent	21	21	19	22	8	22	16	27
Do not understand it particularly well	5	2	2	2	10	3	4	9
Do not understand it at all	1	3	-	1	-	4	0	1

Q.9

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the same sex marriage referendum is about?

Q.11

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the Presidential Candidate Age Referendum is about?

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Background

Fieldwork for today's poll was conducted over the period 1st – 11th May last. As such, this might be described as the last Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Poll before the Summer "Silly Season", during which voters typically become even more disengaged from the political process than usual.

From the Government's perspective, the last number of weeks has been somewhat mixed. From a negative perspective, problems with the HSE continue unabated as a series of scandals and enquiries are revealed and announced.

There has arguably been more good news than bad for the Government of late, however, with Finance Minister, Michael Noonan, making positive noises about likely tax reductions in the end of year budget, perhaps even stretching to a cut in the hated Universal Social Charge.

As fieldwork for today's poll ended, talks on public pay restoration had literally just begun, following a period of eight years during which the public pay bill had either been reduced or remained static.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Background

Much has been made of a tightening in support for the same sex marriage referendum in recent weeks, and the negative impact a rejection of the proposal would have on Fine Gael in particular.

While the vote is certainly tightening, it is hard to see how it will be rejected outright, regardless of how low the turnout is or indeed how large the so-called "Silent No" constituency is.

Against this reasonably positive backdrop, commentary is now beginning to turn to the possibility of the Government cutting and running to a General Election this Autumn instead of running its full term, perhaps preceded by a mini-budget in advance, with a view to capitalising on the ever-improving economic climate.

This may not be as absurd a notion as it seems, with the last-minute surge in support for the Conservative Party in the UK proof positive that it could in fact work for the Government parties here.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Background

Indeed, based on the results of today's Poll, a relatively modest improvement in support for Fine Gael and Labour could produce enough seats in a general election scenario for the formation of a Rainbow Coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and the Green Party.

From an opposition party perspective, one of the great imponderables over the last number of years has been Fianna Fáil's Opinion Poll figure, which has remained stubbornly rooted at in or around 18% - essentially the same share of vote it achieved in the last General Election.

At the time of writing, Bobby Aylward remains favourite to win the Carlow/Kilkenny By-Election on May the 22nd next. There have, however, been low-level rumblings to the effect that Fine Gael's David Fitzgerald could possibly retain that party's seat on the day.

Anything short of a Fianna Fáil victory in that election would undoubtedly reignite Fianna Fáil party debate around the leadership question, potentially precipitating a full blown leadership heave.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Party Support and Leader Satisfaction Levels

Our last poll in March registered significant jumps in satisfaction with the Government, Enda Kenny as Taoiseach, and Joan Burton as Tánaiste.

These increases coincided with an uplift in support for both Fine Gael and Labour, and corresponding declines for Sinn Féin and Independents.

In today's poll, levels of satisfaction with the Government, and with the leaders of practically all of the main political parties, have settled back to their December 2014 levels with the exception of Micheál Martin as leader of Fianna Fáil whose personal satisfaction rating has dipped to 35% - its lowest in almost three years.

At a macro-level, it has been a feature of the last three consecutive polls that little has separated any of the party leaders in terms of their personal satisfaction ratings, with all of them registering in the mid to high 30s.

This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the type of political leadership currently on offer in the country, and is undoubtedly indicative of a broader sense of discontent and malaise with the body politic in general.

As suggested in our background commentary, the Government parties will be reasonably pleased with the results of today's poll, which suggest that the uplift in support experienced eight weeks ago has maintained.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Party Support and Leader Satisfaction Levels

Thus, Fine Gael at 27% support and Labour at 8%, while a long way off their last General Election result, command a solid 35% of popular support – certainly enough to build upon over the coming months, although not yet enough, of course, to form a Government.

With regard to the opposition, Fianna Fáil remains stuck on 17%, and its support is particularly low amongst the more well to do ABC1 professional and white collar workers, as well as in the Dublin and Munster regions.

As is normally the case, Sinn Féin support peaks at 30% amongst 18-34 year olds, and at 26% within the C2DE blue collar working section of the Electorate.

Meanwhile, Independent candidate support has registered at an average of 26% over the last four Behaviour & Attitudes Polls, and there is now little doubt that at least 30 such candidates are likely to be returned to the next Dáil, representing a disparate cross-section of economic and social viewpoints.

In truth, we are no closer as we reach the mid-point of 2015 to predicting the likely make-up of the next Irish coalition, with the outcome well and truly all to play for.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Same Sex Marriage & Presidential Age Referenda

In our last poll conducted in March it was flagged that the Presidential Candidate age Referendum was in serious danger of being defeated.

At that stage, while a bare majority (57%) of 18-34 year olds supported reducing the age of presidential candidates from 35 to 21 years, 55% of the total electorate were opposed to it – more so as respondents progressed up the age spectrum.

Today's poll has produced very similar results, albeit with the proportion opposed to reducing presidential candidates' age increasing marginally to 58%. Significantly, however, the percentage in favour of an age reduction has reduced from 40% to just 33% of all voters, as the "Don't Knows" also increase four percentage points.

It is still the case that those aged 35 years plus are overwhelmingly opposed to this constitutional change, and it appears almost certain to be defeated at the ballot box next Friday the 22nd of May.

By far the most hotly debated of the two referenda has of course been "The Same Sex Marriage" one. As discussed at the outset of this commentary, the general consensus has been that opposition to a constitutional amendment in favour of same sex marriage has been growing over the last few weeks as the campaign has gained traction, and that the outcome of that referendum is likely to be a lot closer than the polls have been indicating.

Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Opinion Poll Series

Same Sex Marriage & Presidential Age Referenda

The results of today's survey certainly confirm a tightening of the vote, with the percentage in favour of a Yes vote declining from 73% to 63% over the last eight weeks, with a corresponding uplift of four percentage points for the No vote and six percentage points for the Undecideds.

Support for the amendment remains highest amongst younger (18-34 year olds) voters, at 79% support, and it is true that this is the cohort less likely to actually turn out and vote on the day.

It is also notable that significantly more 55 years plus voters are now indicating they will vote No (47%) than will vote Yes (39%).

Notwithstanding all of these dynamics, however, it is still our view that the Yes vote will prevail on the day, by a margin of at least 60:40.

Thank You



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