



# Voting Intention Opinion Poll

May 2009

Prepared for

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

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

## **Must be Included**

**RED C interviewed a random sample of 1001 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.**



## SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009 Opinion Poll

### **Fine Gael continues upward trend in support.**

With the campaign now in full swing we can begin to see the impact campaigning for the local and European elections is having on voter sentiment. Fine Gael has gained most from the renewed focus on the parties by the voting public. Their support at a national level continues to climb, reaching 34% in today's poll, which is as high as we have seen since November last year when the financial crisis began to hit home to voters. They have also gained significant support locally among the public, now that candidates have begun campaigning, and as voters begin to think more earnestly about whom they will support at the ballot box in just over two weeks time. The party secures 34% of the vote for the Local elections, which is a 6% rise in the support they actually obtained five years ago. This is certainly a positive result for candidates on the ground, as it does suggest that the impact of local personalities themselves may not benefit Fianna Fail as much as some commentators have suggested. In terms of the European elections the party also remains on course to do well, retaining 32% of the first preference vote nationally.

The Labour Party were shown in our first poll of the campaign to have most to gain in these Local and European Elections, and today's poll reaffirms this, albeit with a slightly lower share of the vote now that candidates have begun campaigning in earnest. At a national level the party secures 18% of the first preference vote, down 1% from two weeks ago; but still suggesting that the party appears to have seen a real shift towards it during the economic crisis, before which it was polling closer to 11%.

In terms of voter behaviour at the local election support has fallen back somewhat for the party, perhaps due to the fact that when presented with candidates on the ground many may be new or unknown to voters. The party still secure 16% of the first preference vote for local elections, but this has fallen back from the 20% they secured two weeks ago. This lack of long term presence on the ground in some locations appears to benefit Fine Gael. At a European Election level Labour also secures 16% of the first preference vote, which is very similar to that seen two weeks ago and well ahead of the share they secured at the last European Elections in 2004.



Today's poll provides no real comfort for Fianna Fail. At a national level the party secures 24% of the first preference vote. While this is up 1% on results seen two weeks ago, it remains a very poor result for the party when compared to the General Election just two years ago. It also means that the party support remains 10% behind Fine Gael. At a local level party support for Fianna Fail falls back slightly to 22% of the first preference vote nationally. In this regard it doesn't appear that local candidate campaigning has had any impact on voter's opinions.

However, as we know local candidates appear to have done their utmost to disengage themselves from the party, with some posters for candidates making the party name so small that it can be missed. It is also true that when it comes to giving a vote in the booth at a local level, voters may still find it difficult not to support a local candidate who has looked after them in their constituency, even if they belong to a party that the voter would no longer support. It is difficult to know at this stage how much impact local personalities will have in overcoming the national backlash directed at Fianna Fail. Whatever happens, it is likely that the party will do even worse, than in 2004 where they secured 32% of the first preference vote. At a European level the party does secure its highest share of the vote at 25% in today's' poll the same as recorded two weeks ago. Again, this is down on what was achieved at the last elections in 2004, but may be strong enough to see them retain their European Election seats.

Sinn Fein however could be in danger of losing their only European Election seat, won by Mary Lou McDonald back in 2004. Support for the party falls back slightly in today's poll to just 7%, some way behind the 11% they secured in 2004. While on a smaller base size and therefore not wholly reliable the figures also suggest that Dublin is where support has fallen most, with the party securing an average of just 7% across the last two polls in this constituency. This combined with the fact that the constituency has been changed to just three seats, makes it appear likely that the party will lose its European seat.

In terms of the local elections, the party is set to secure a similar proportion of the first preference vote that they achieved in 2004, with 8% of the first preference vote in today's poll. Nationally Sinn Fein secures a similar 7% share of the first preference vote, which is the same the party achieved at the last General Election.

Today's poll is not good for the Green Party. In terms of national support for the party they see a drop back to 5% of the first preference vote, down 2% on that they achieved just two weeks ago. This will of course be a major concern for the party, which has seen a similar trend at every recent election, where support among voters seems to fall away as people actually decide how they will vote in the polling booth. Support for the party also falls back in terms of likely voter behaviour at the European elections to 5% and in the Local elections to 4%. The importance of this decline in support in a wider context is the impact it may have on the Green party's decision to remain in government with Fianna Fail. If the Greens do indeed fair poorly in the upcoming Local and European elections, and they feel that voters are beginning to include them in the blame for the current economic crisis, which they have remained somewhat removed from until now, they may well consider their position which in turn could trigger a General Election.

Independent candidates appear to be doing well out of the current political situation. They do usually see a bounce in support at Local and European elections as they receive more focus and airtime, and the electorate feel they can justify a vote perhaps more so in these elections where the local candidate often has more influence than the party in how people vote. In today's poll they secure 12% of the first preference vote nationally, rising to 12% in terms of the European elections and 16% in terms of the Local Elections. Locally this figure is similar to the proportion of votes secured at the last election in 2004, while at a European level they remain 5% behind the support they achieved in 2004. This appears to be mainly due to a fall in support in the South and Northwest constituencies, with Marian Harkin and Kathy Sinnott under pressure to retain their seats.

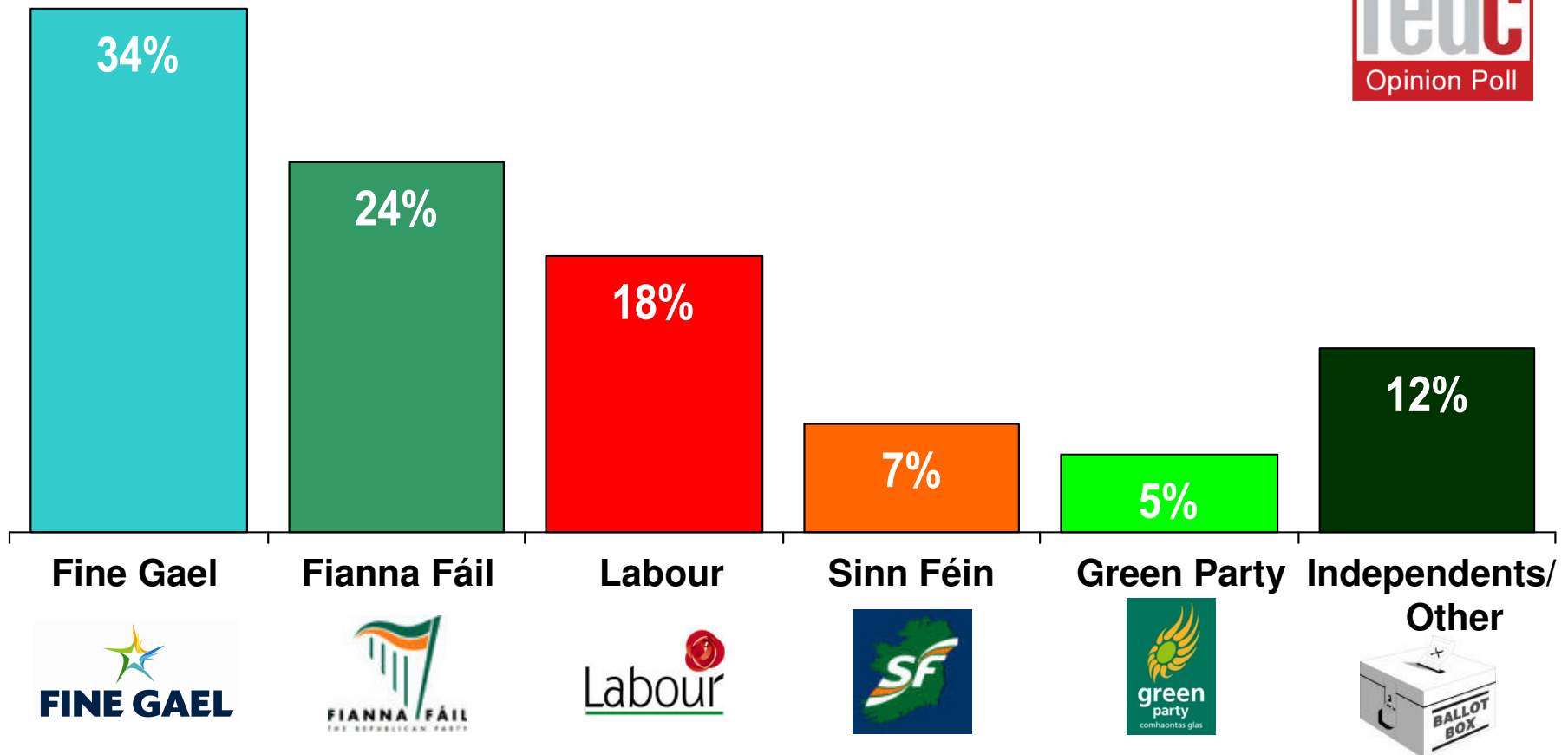
Finally, Libertas do see a rise in support in today's European Election voting intention figures, but only by 1% nationally taking their support to 3% of the first preference vote. They have made the biggest gains in Declan Ganley's own Northwest constituency, but also do make some gains in Dublin.

As a summary it appears that the campaigning of candidates has had some impact on how voters feel they will vote in just over two weeks time, with Fine Gael gaining most at this stage, and Labour losing out slightly. Perhaps of greater importance is the decline in support for the Green party, which combined with a poor showing for Fianna Fail could possibly be a trigger for a general election ahead of schedule.

# 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+)

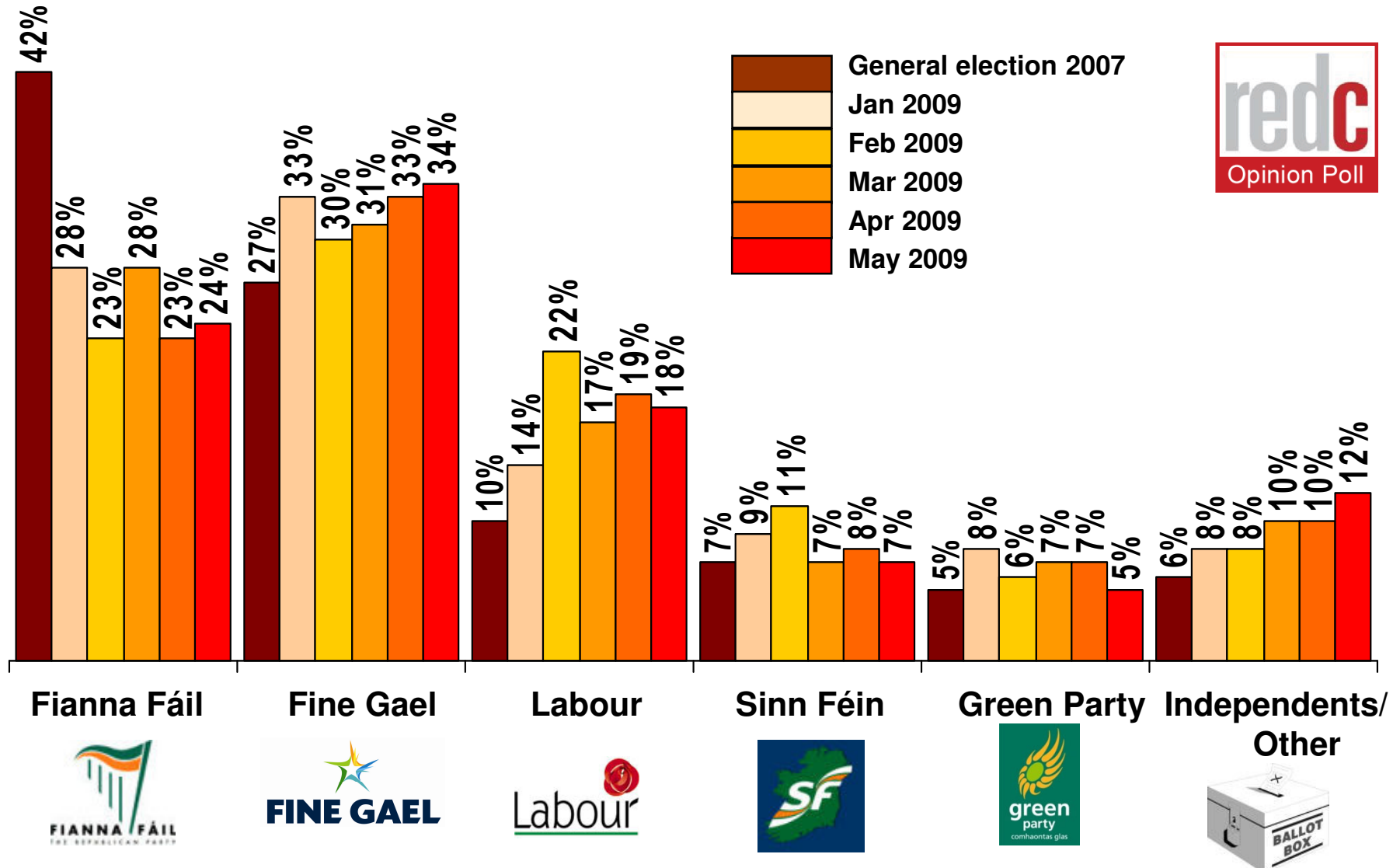
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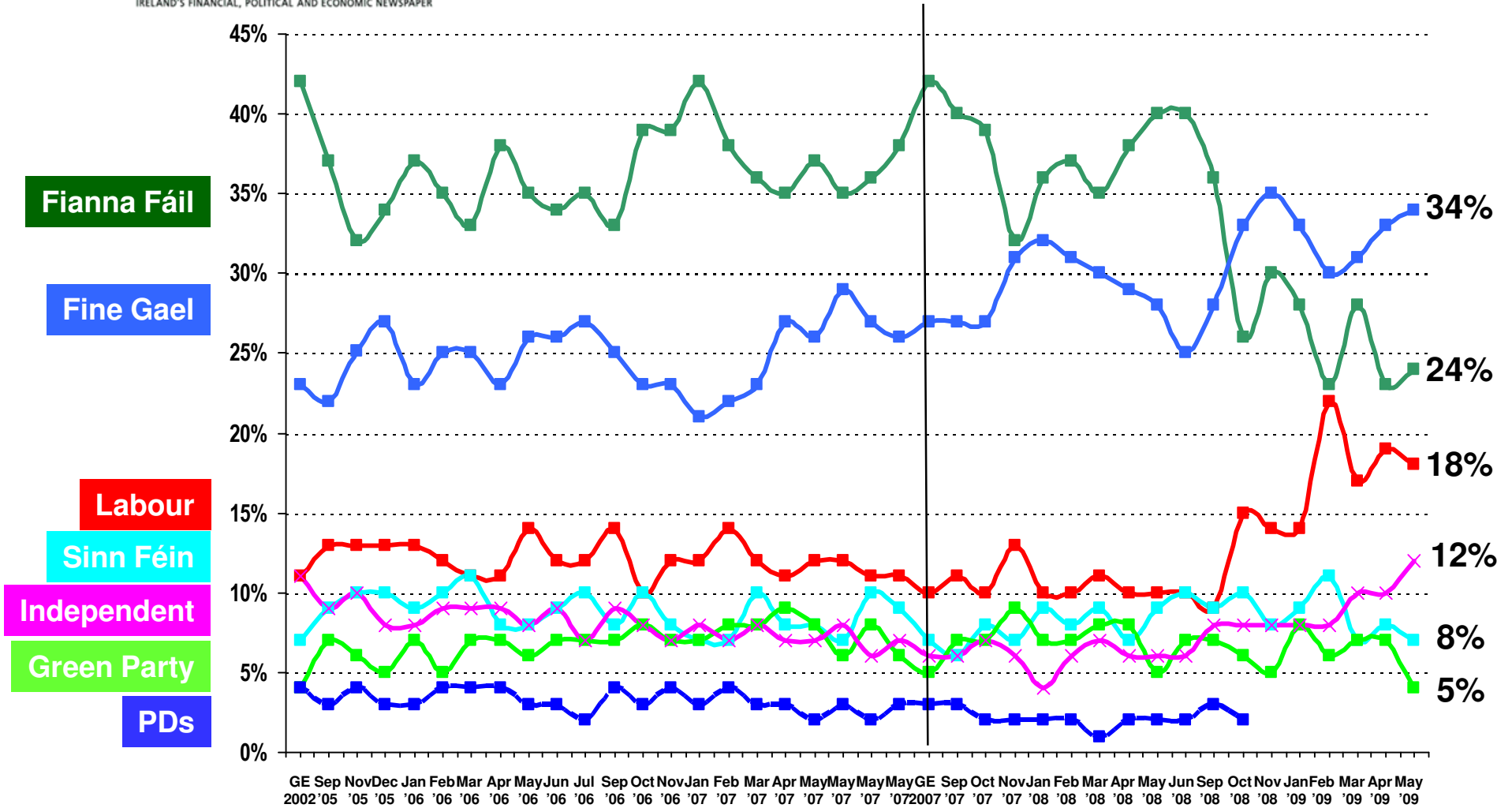


# If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



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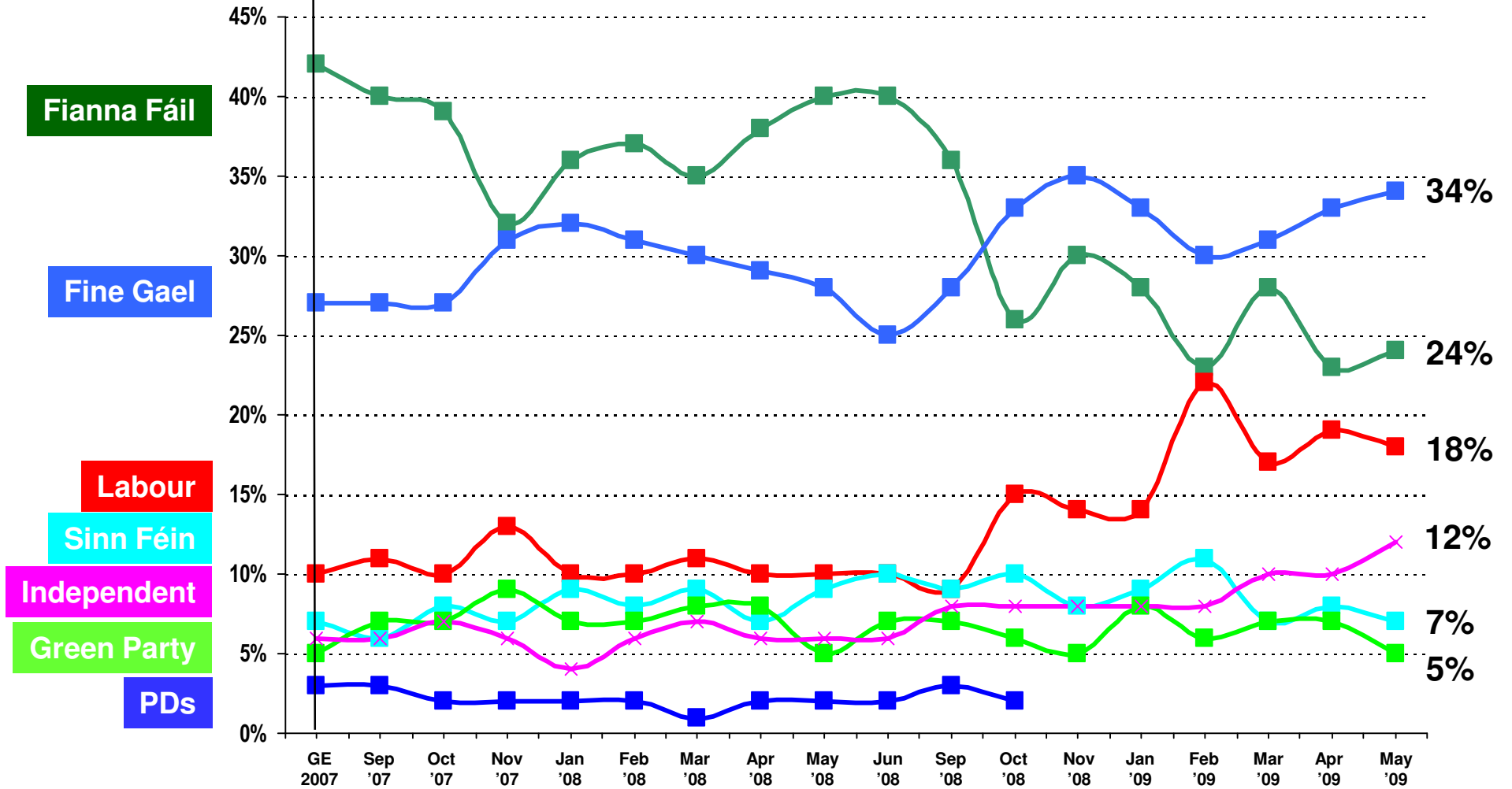


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**CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT**

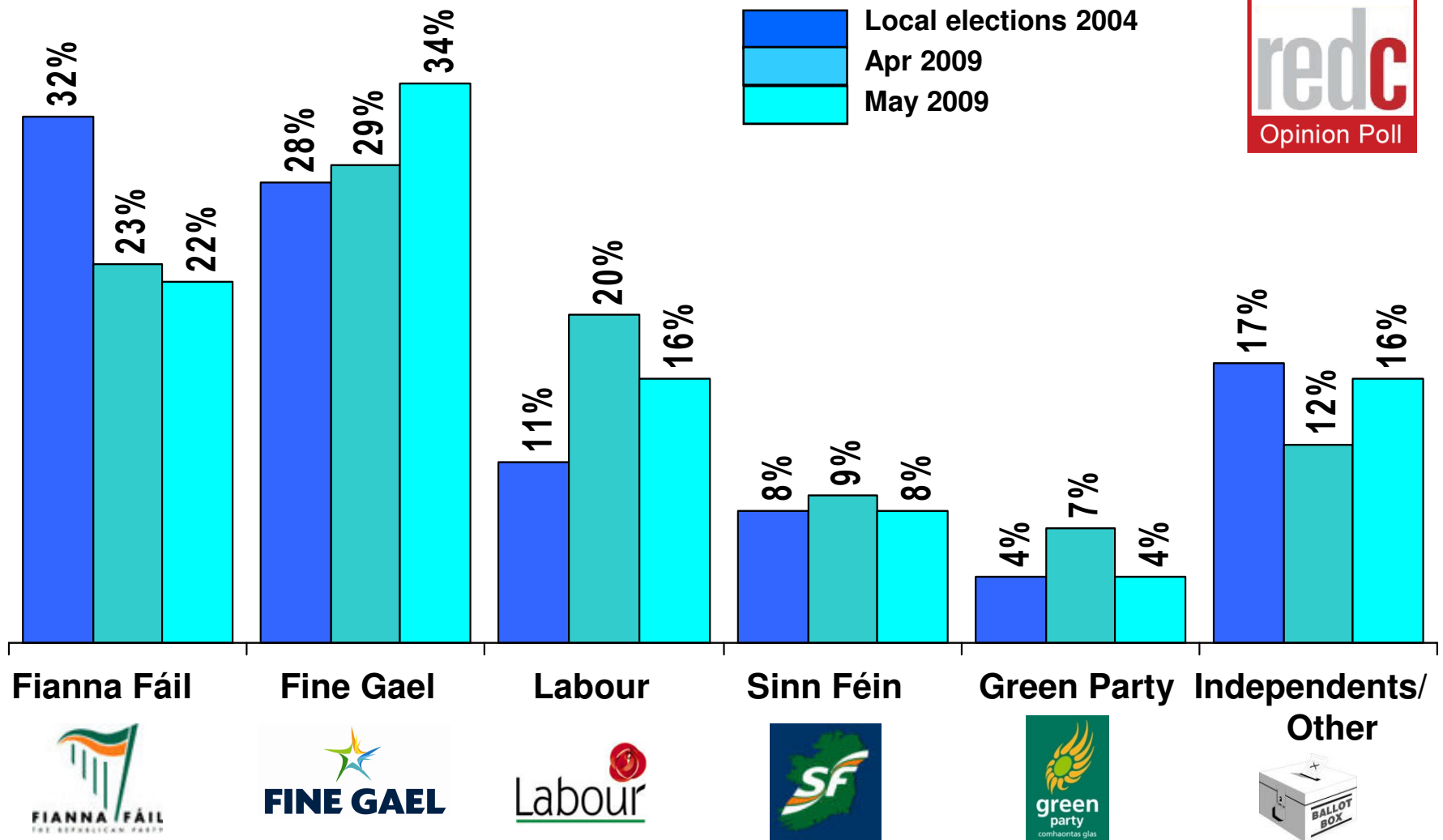
	<b>Core figures May 09</b>	<b>Excluding undecided</b>	<b>2007 Election Results</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Fine Gael</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Independents/Ot hers</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>9</b>		

**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)

	Mar 2009	Feb 2009	Jan 2009	Nov 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	June 2008	May 2008	April 2008	Mar 2008	Feb 2008	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	2007 Election Result
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Fine Gael</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Independents/ Others</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

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

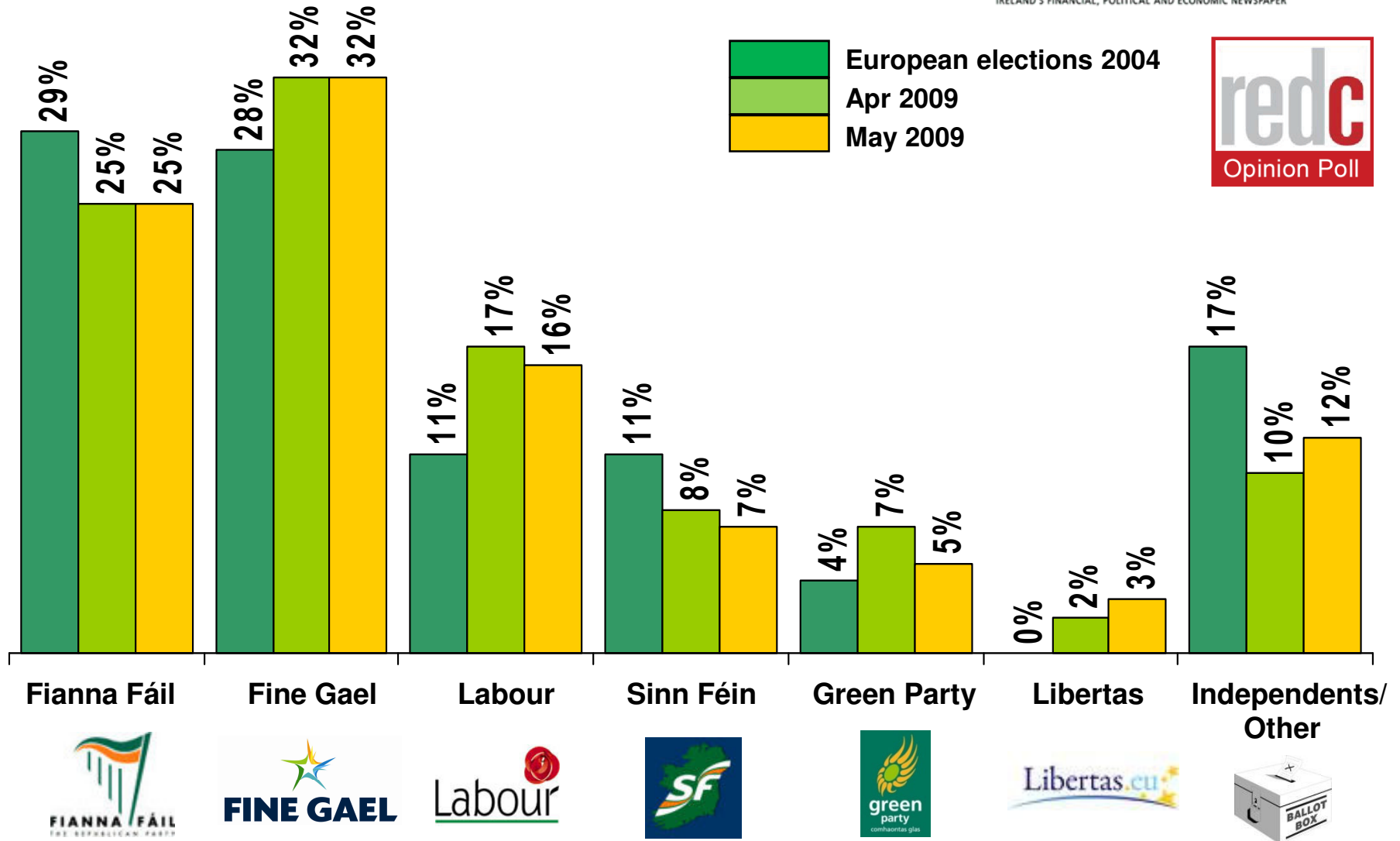
(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



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

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)

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# How you will vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum to be held again this year?



(Base: All IRISH CITIZENS 18+ likely to vote)

