



Voting Intention Tracking Poll

February 2010

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



Methodology and Weighting

RED C interviewed a random sample of 1007 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 22nd & 24th February 2010.

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.

Finally 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 5 to 10 are included as being those who will actually go and vote.

SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 28th February 2010 - Opinion Poll

Resignations cancel each other out, and its as you were in February!

The second Sunday Business Post/RED C poll of 2010 shows party support almost identical to that recorded in January - despite the series of high profile resignations and the recriminations associated with these at Leinster House in the past four weeks.

This poll has been hotly anticipated due to the raft of resignations, that began when George Lee walked out on the party at the start of February. The immediate impact appeared to be very damaging for Enda Kenny in particular, who was in the firing line, mainly it appeared from people within his own party. But events were soon overtaken by Deidre de Burca then walking out of the Green party, and in the process attacking her own leader John Gormley. Hardly having had time to catch our breath, this was swiftly followed by the forced resignation of Willie O'Dea from his ministerial post, with Green party chairman Dan Boyle tweeting his lack of confidence in the minister and John Gormley this time pulling the trigger. With recriminations still rumbling the fourth resignation occurred, with Green party TD Trevor Sargeant resigning from his position as Minister of State in the Department of Agriculture, after leaks of his correspondence with the Gardai.

Many would have expected that these extraordinary happenings might lead to another sea change in political party support among voters, instead it appears that the net result of all these events has been to cancel each other out and leave the parties pretty much where they were when it all started. Quite possibly to the annoyance of those who resigned to make a point about their parties, such as George Lee and Deidre de Burca.

Fine Gael remain the leading party, securing 34% of the first preference vote in today's poll, and these figures suggest that the party has weathered the storm that arose with the resignation of George Lee. Had we polled closer to the resignation there may have been more impact, but this result shows that it was perhaps more of a storm in the tea cup to the general public, than even members within the party assumed.

This theory is further backed up by the fact that voters now have more confidence in the Fine Gael/Labour main opposition parties to manage the economy, surely much to the disgust of George Lee himself! A third now agree that they have confidence in the main opposition parties to manage the economy, up 7% since October last year and now a good 13% ahead of the public's confidence in the current government and their ability to handle the economy

Despite the fact that it now appears Fine Gael party members were doing themselves no favours in publicly talking about Enda Kenny's "poor performance", there is still some bad news for Enda Kenny in this poll. When asked directly, over two in five voters (43%), agree that they would be more likely to vote Fine Gael if he was not leading the party. Almost half (48%) of Fianna Fail voters agree this to be the case, but perhaps even more damaging is the fact that over 2 in 5 (43%) of those who currently claim they would probably vote Fine Gael in an election, would be more likely to vote for Fine Gael if he was not leader. These results suggest that while the party is doing well, it could be doing even better, and that its own current supporters may be more loyal come election day were he replaced.

Fianna Fail will be delighted to retain 27% of the first preference vote, as this consolidates the gains they achieved in the first poll of the year. The fact that this was achieved despite the pressure they were put under by their coalition partners the Greens, and the eventual forced resignation of Willie O'Dea, makes it an even better result for the party.

Labour will probably be the most disappointed with the results from today's poll. After all they are practically the only major party that didn't have some one resign! Perhaps the lack of coverage for them has not helped their support? Even so, given the other parties troubles, it appears that Labour may have hit something of a brick wall in terms of moving support further. It should also be noted that 42% of current Labour supporters agree they would be more likely to vote Fine Gael if Enda Kenny wasn't leader, an indication perhaps that Labour's current supporters may not all be loyal.

The Green Party will be another party happy to see their support stable after the month they have had. They have after all been at the heart of three resignations this month! It appears however that the possible damaging resignation of Deidre de Burca was well combated by the party, and their stronger stand over Willie O'Dea may have helped offset any damage from this. While the gentlemanly way in which Trevor Sergeant resigned is unlikely to have impacted poorly on their support, and may even have made the party look principled to voters.

Despite this stable support for the Greens however, it is apparent from questions asked in this months tracking poll, that a large proportion of voters believe it is time for them to leave government.

Just under half (45%) of all voters, and over half (56%) of those that expressed an opinion, agree that they believe it is now time for the Greens to leave the current government. While based on a small sample of people, indications suggest that this may also be the opinion of around half of all those who currently support the Greens.

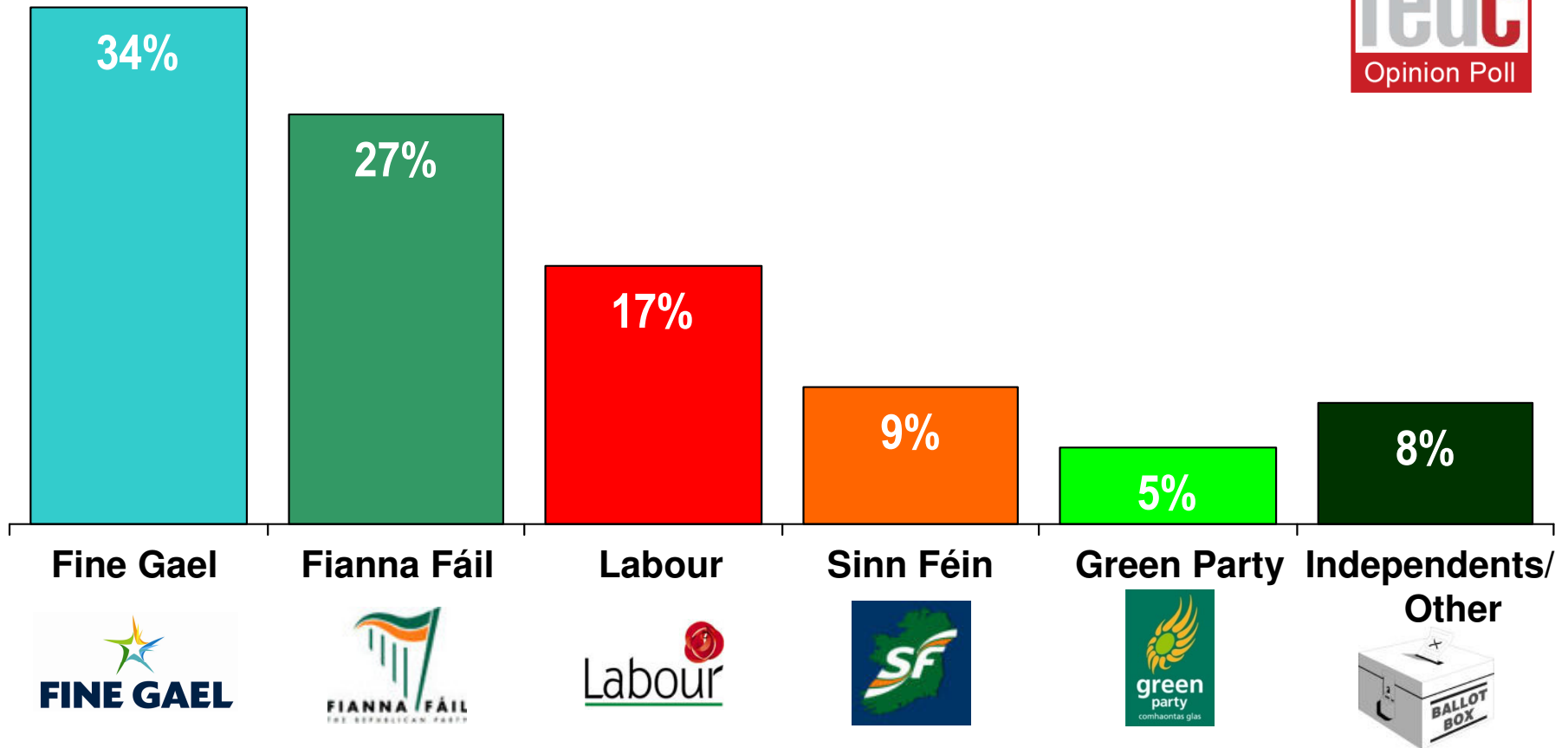
Sinn Fein are strangely the only party to have gained a 1% share of the vote, leaving them securing 9% in today's poll. This is very much within margin of error, but may be something to do with the successful talks in Northern Ireland. Finally the independents share of the vote falls back further by 1% to leave them securing 8% of the first preference vote.

All in all after a tumultuous month in politics, it appears that dust has settled to a position very similar to where we were prior to these events. The tit for tat resignations appear to have balanced each other out, and for some of those who resigned this will be very disappointing. However, the issues that led to some of those resignations do remain a concern for many voters and supporters of the parties involved, and as such we may not have seen the final impact just yet.

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+)

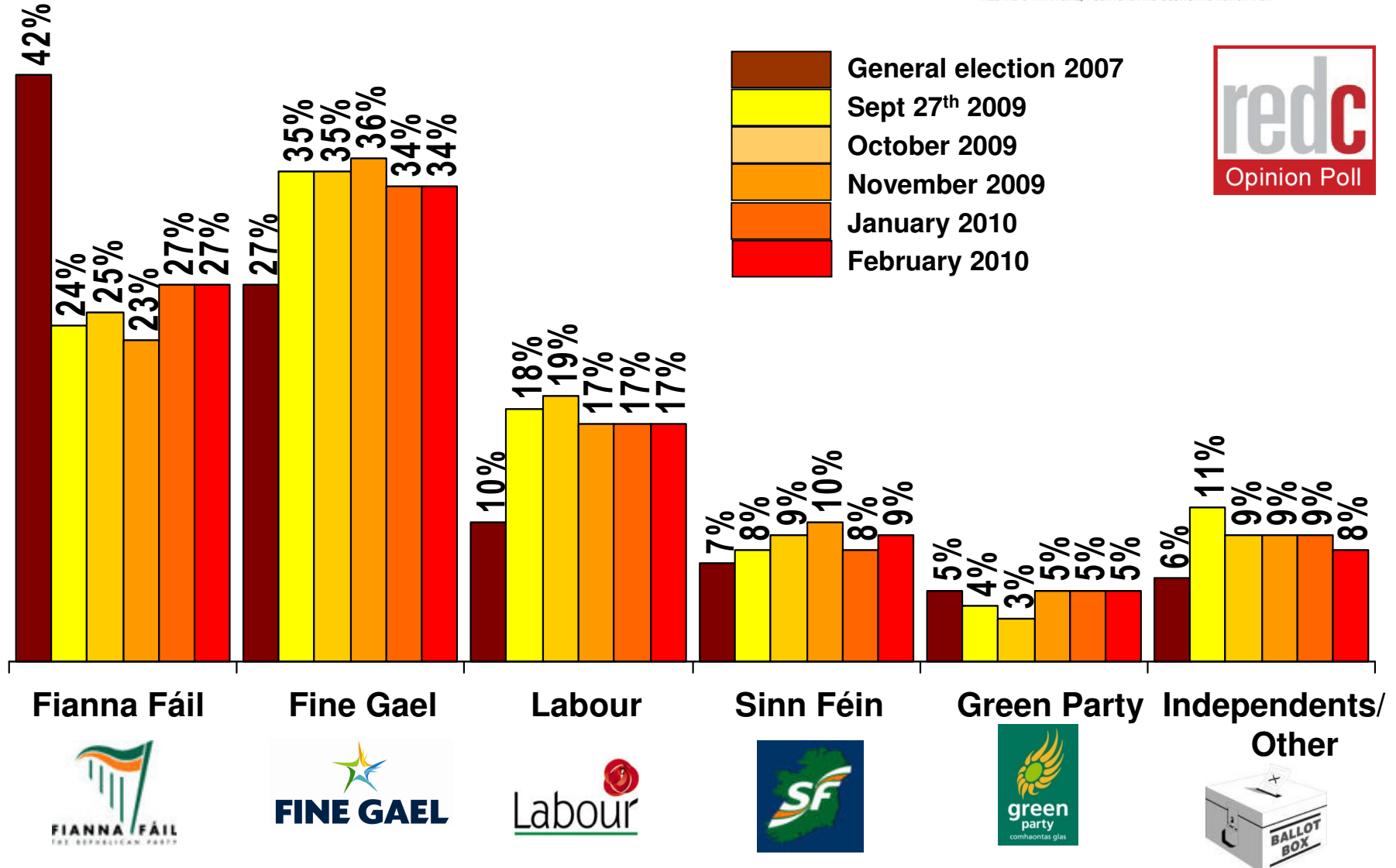
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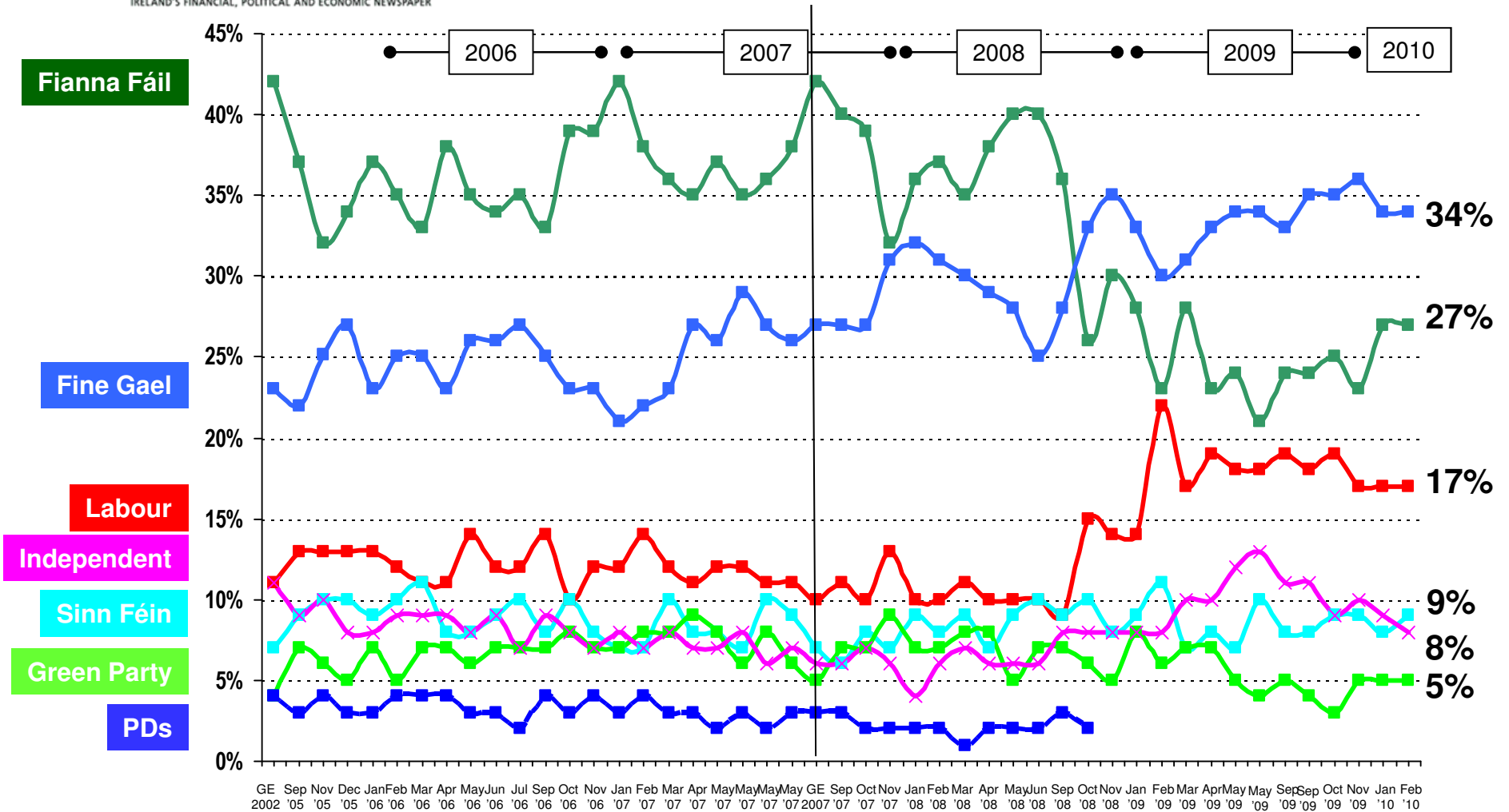
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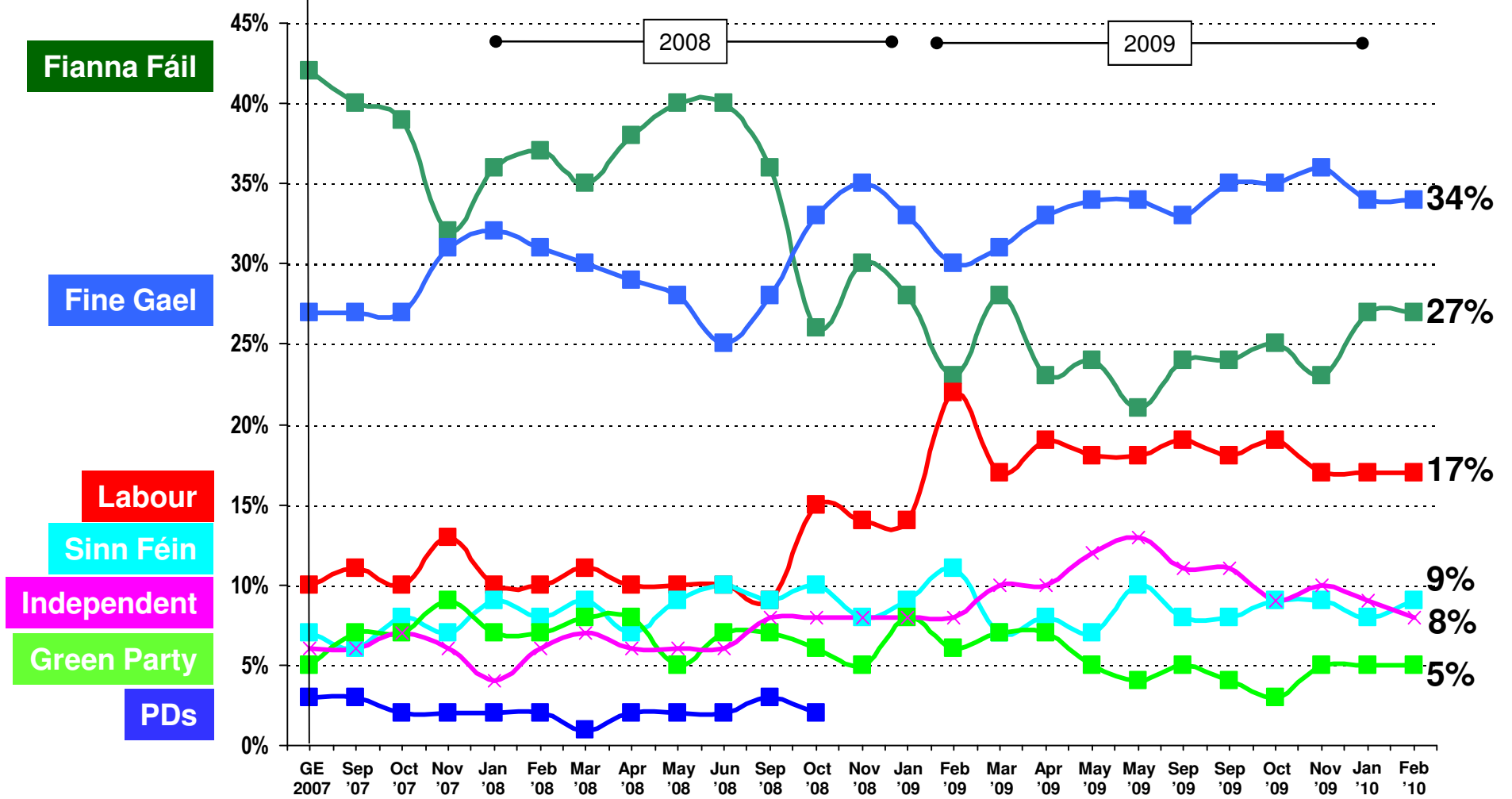


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CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures 28th Feb 2010	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	29	34	27
Fianna Fáil	22	27	42
Labour	14	17	10
Sinn Féin	7	9	7
Green Party	5	5	5
Independents/Others	7	8	6
Undecided	16		

Confidence in parties to manage the public finances out of the current downturn

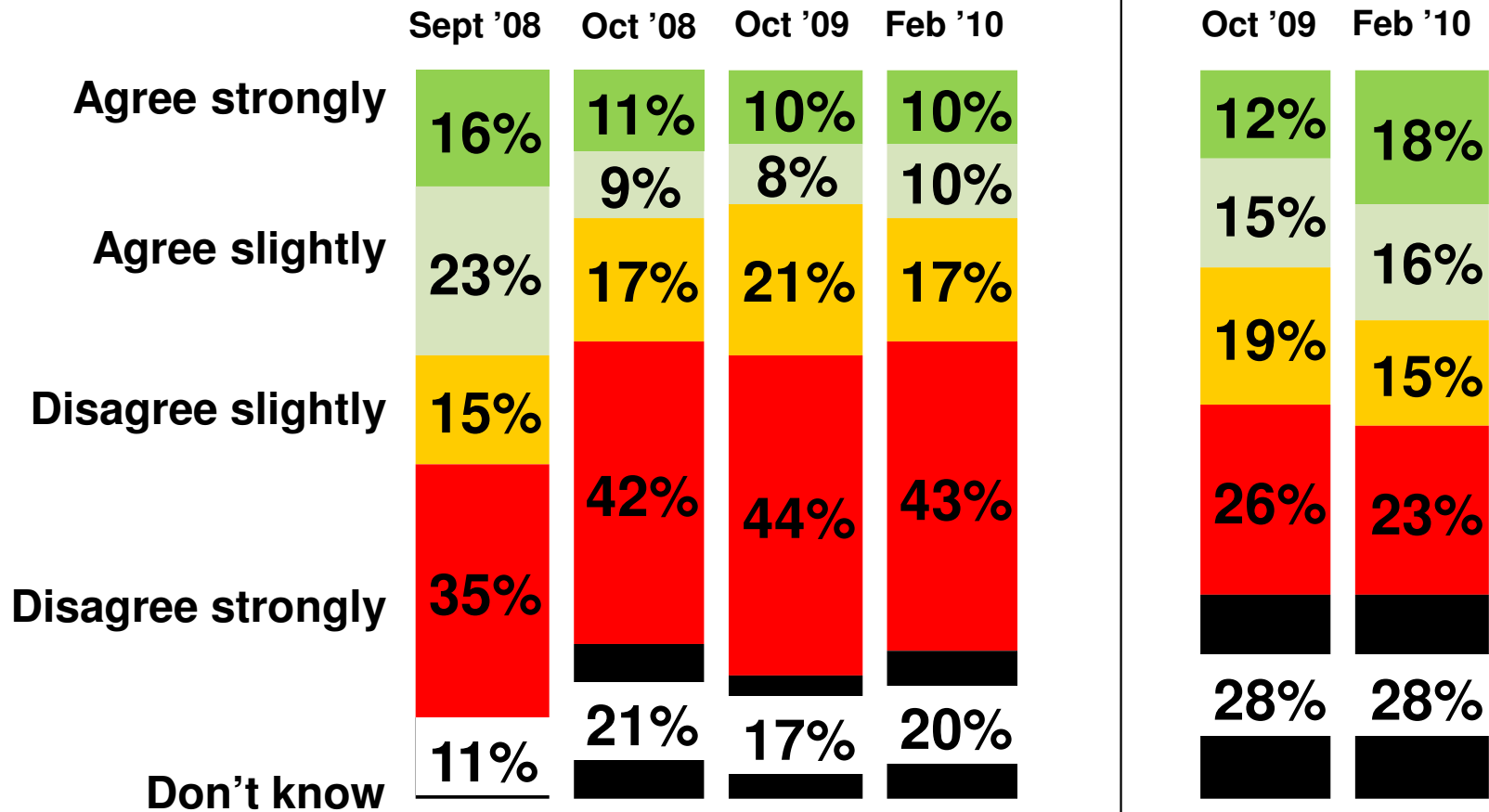
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Government

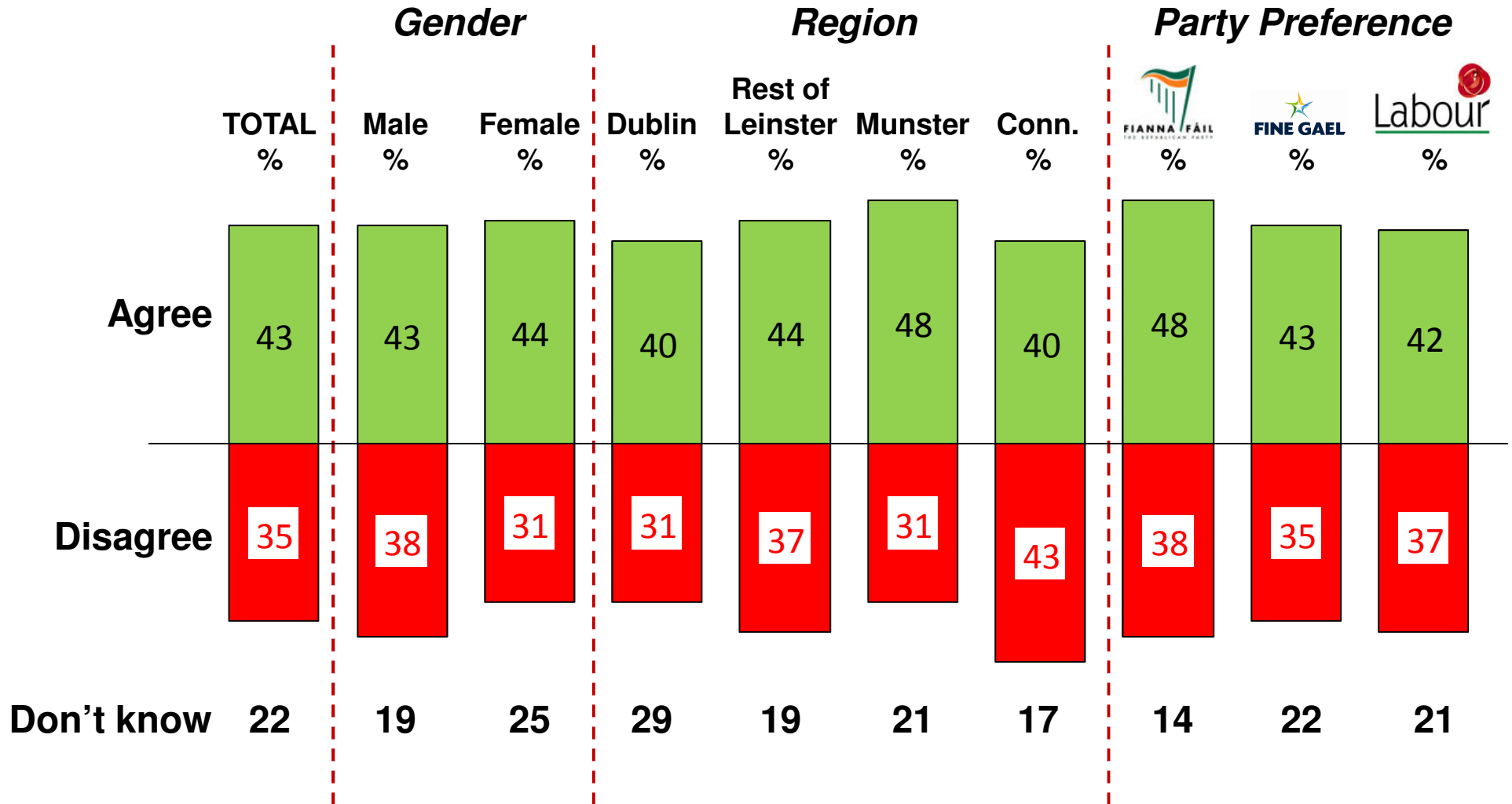
Opposition Fine Gael/ Labour



Proportion who agree or disagree that they would be more likely to vote Fine Gael if Enda Kenny was not the leader



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Proportion who agree or disagree that the Green Party should now leave the government coalition

(Base: All adults 18+)



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