



Voting Intention Opinion Poll

March 2009

Prepared for

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

Must be Included

RED C interviewed a random sample of 1000 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 23rd & 25th March 2009. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.



SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 28th March 2009 Opinion Poll

Core support returns for Fianna Fail, while Labour falls back

After the radical shifts in public support for political parties evident in last month's Sunday Business Post/ RED C poll, today sees support levels settle to perhaps more realistic levels. Much has been made of Fianna Fail core support in the country standing at around 25-28% of the population, and today's poll appears to further underline this theory, with the party increasing its share of the first preference vote back to 28% in today's poll. To some extent this core support can sometimes be suppressed in the polls when, because of the negative associations of doing so, people feel reluctant to admit to supporting the party, as it is so poorly thought of by the majority. Certainly there doesn't appear to be major reasons for the 5% gains in support made by the party this month, apart from perhaps the coverage of Brian Cowen in the USA, less attention in the media for opposition parties and possibly the negative impact of events in Northern Ireland on Sinn Fein support.

Today's poll also sees Fine Gael bring a to a halt the declining trend in support they have witnessed in recent months. They secure 31% of the first preference vote, up 1% on the support they achieved in February. This means they remain the party with the largest level of support in the country, but only just, with Fianna Fail back to within touching distance, just 3% behind them.

After the meteoric gains in last month's poll, support for Labour falls back this month to perhaps a more realistic level. The party secures 17% of the first preference vote this month, down 5% on the level they achieved in February. This still represents good gains on the support they had achieved towards the end of last year, but will disappoint the party after the highs of last month's polls. However, the 22% support that the party achieved in last month's poll was perhaps somewhat exaggerated by the heavy media coverage the party had enjoyed in the week preceding the poll.

Findings from today's poll once again suggest that the handling of the economy is all important in how people perceive the main political parties. When asked if voters feel that Fine Gael and Labour would do a better job of running the economy just 30% of all voters agree. More worrying for the opposition, is the fact that only just over half of all Fine Gael supporters (53%) and even less Labour supporters



(42%) agree they would do a better job than the current government. This is clearly where the opposition parties still have work to do if they are going to be sure of replacing the government when the time arrives. It also helps us to understand why Fianna Fail may be retaining their core support, in that while few (16%) have confidence that Fianna Fail can manage the public finances, there is little belief that the opposition could do any better.

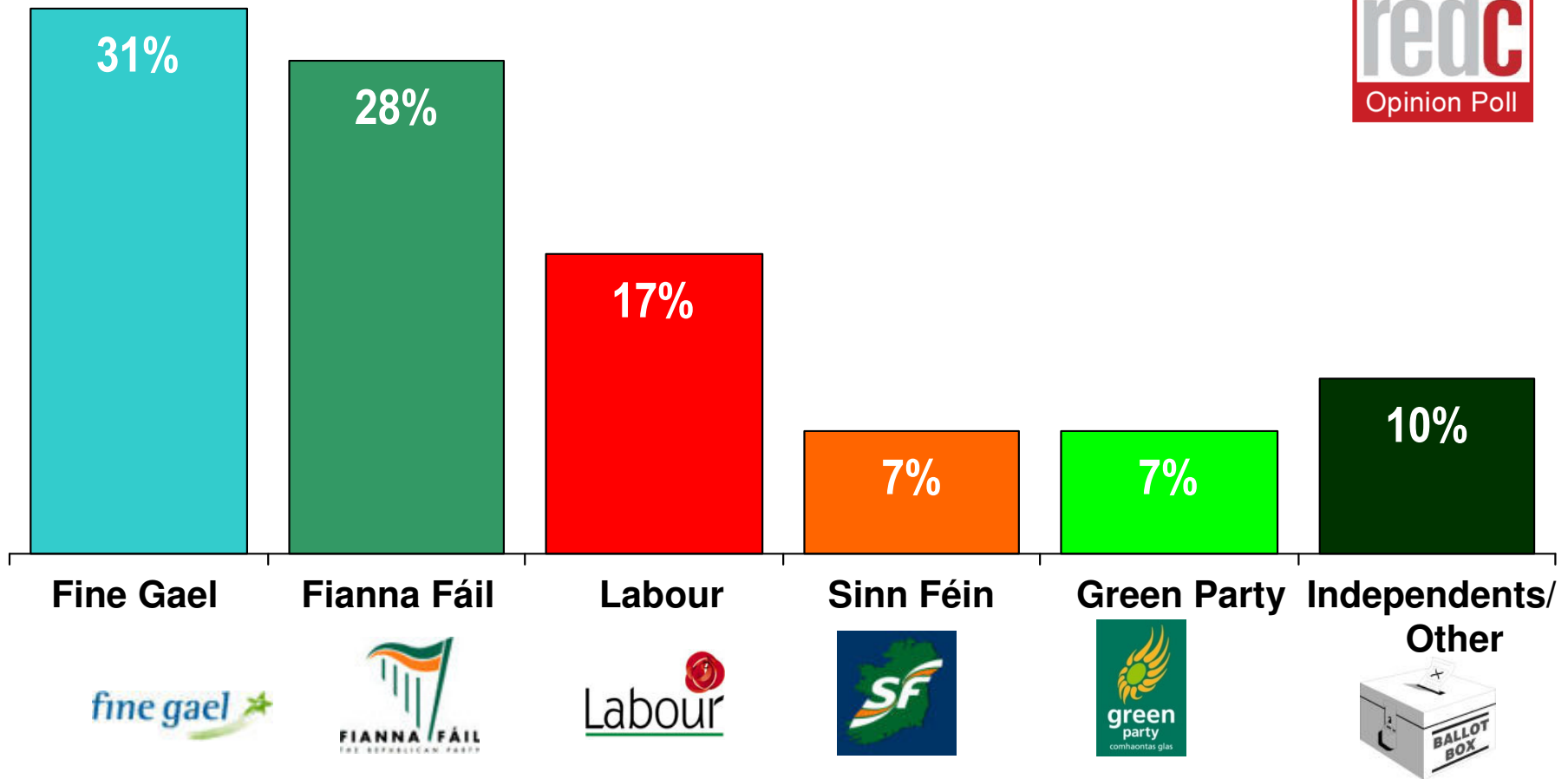
Sinn Fein also sees their support fall back in today's poll after the highs of last month. The party secures just 7% of the first preference vote, after reaching highs of 11% last month. This is the same level that the party achieved at the last elections, and this will be disappointing to the party after seeing a consistent upward trend in recent months. In Sinn Fein's case, this fall in support may well be as a result of the actions of dissident Republicans and the parties response to them in recent weeks.

The Green Party secures 7% of the first preference vote in today's poll. This is a good result for the party, after support fell back last month, and perhaps reinforces the fact that supporters still feel the party is trying to follow its green agenda even in the current climate.

Independent candidates also do well this month, with gains of 2% leaving them securing 10% of the first preference vote. After some months of steady support at 8%, this may signal the fact that voters do not feel any of the parties are offering them a viable alternative in the current economic situation.

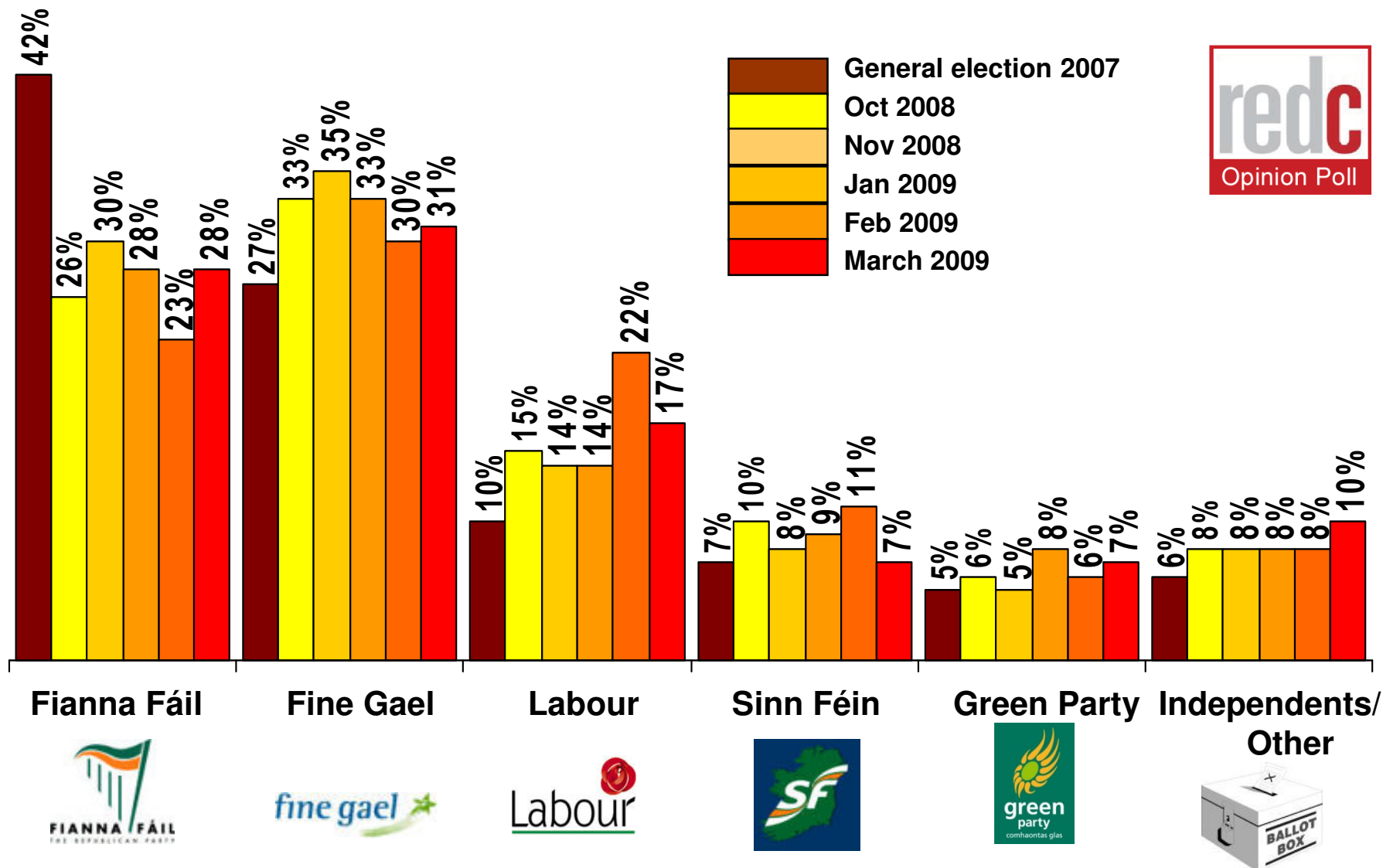
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



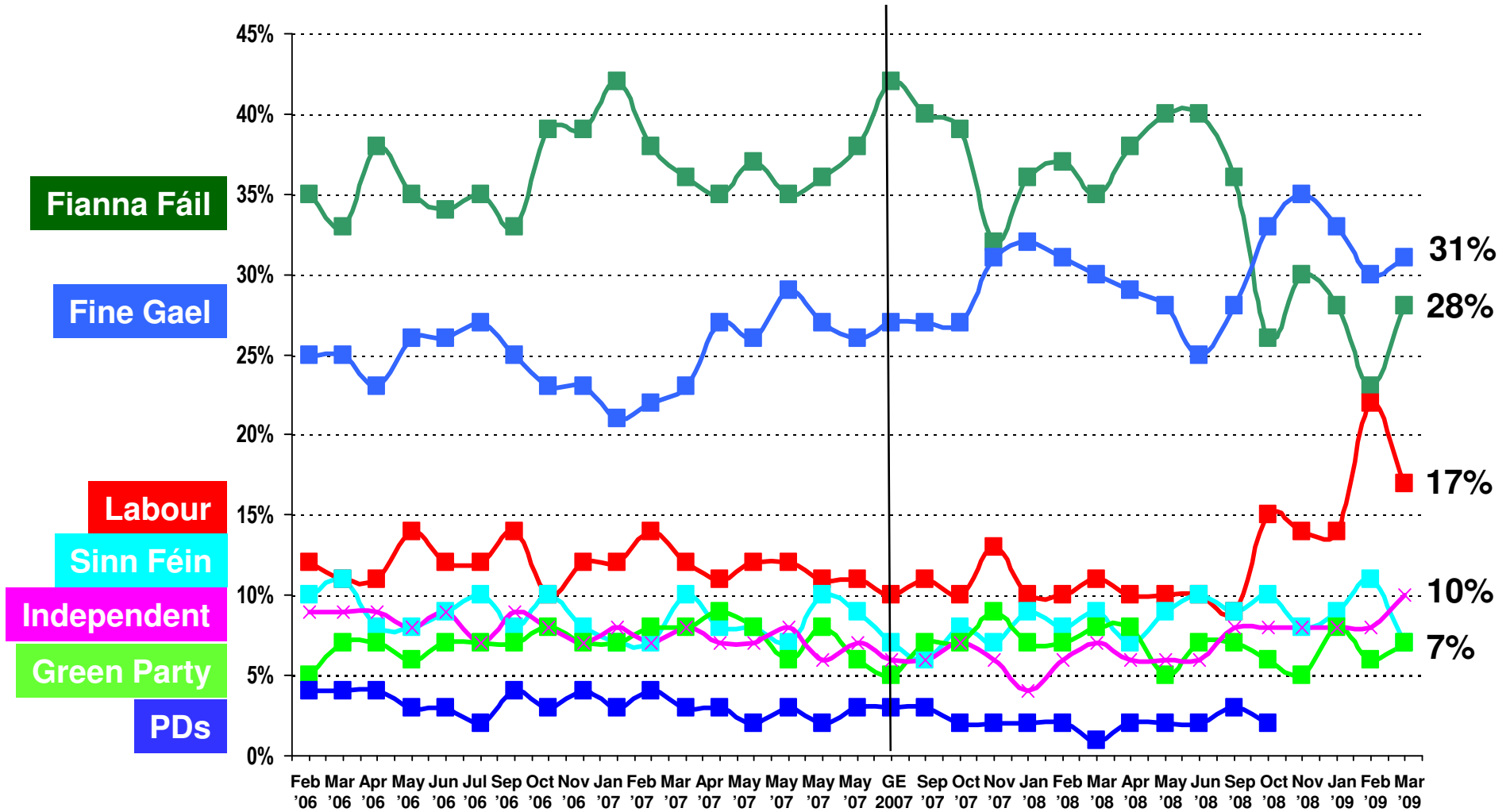
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



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

(Base: All adults 18+)



CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT

	Core figures Feb 08	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	23	31	42
Fine Gael	25	28	27
Labour	14	17	10
Sinn Féin	6	7	7
Green Party	6	7	5
Independents/Ot hers	8	10	6
Undecided	18		

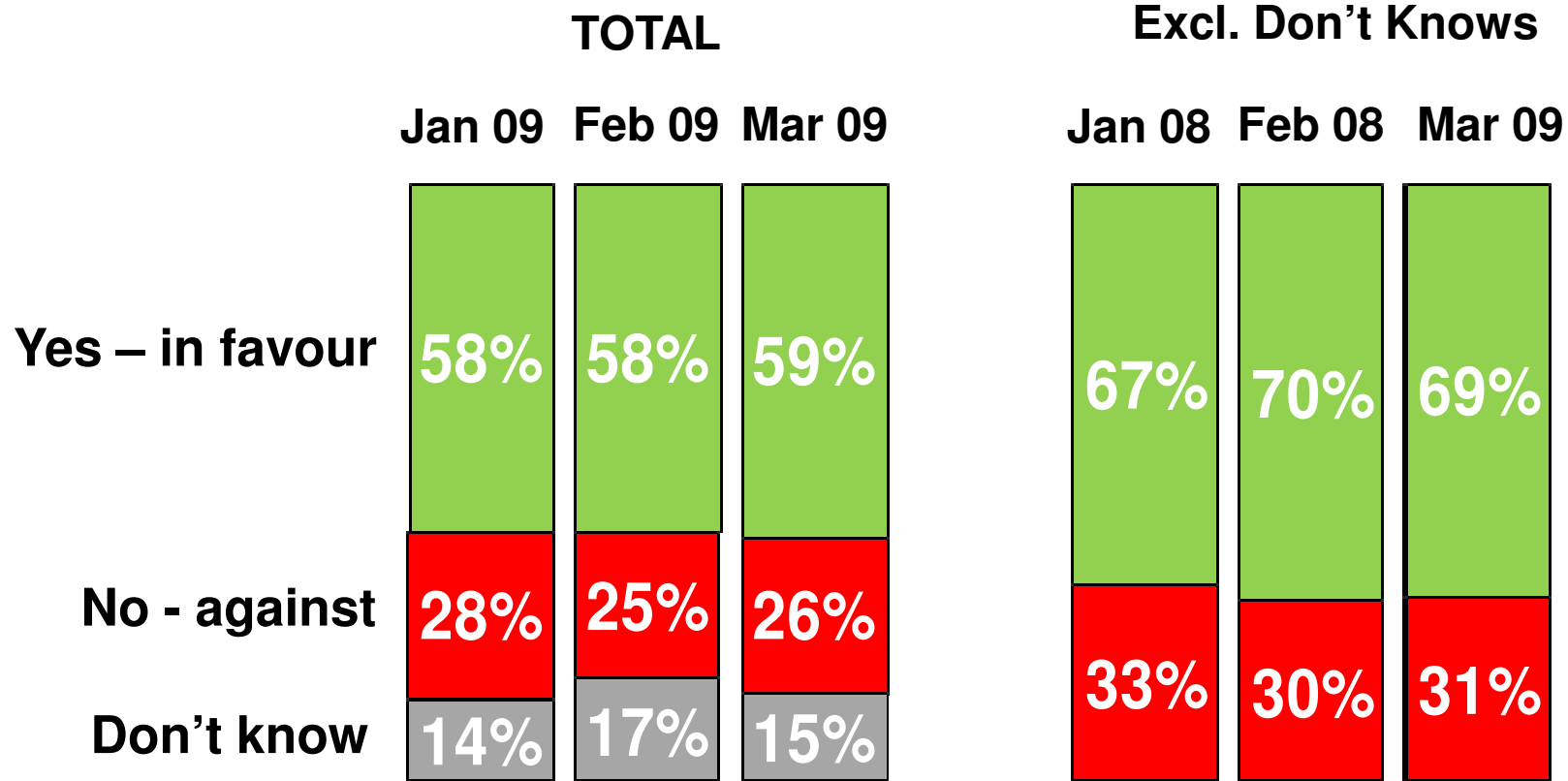
CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT BY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE
 (those who give a score of 7 or more out of 10, on a scale where 1 = Definitely will not vote and 10 = Definitely will vote)

	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
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	27	24	28	29	26	36	40	39	37	36	38	33	40	42
Fine Gael	32	30	33	36	34	28	25	28	29	30	30	31	28	27
Labour	17	23	15	14	15	9	10	10	11	10	10	13	10	10
Sinn Féin	7	10	9	7	9	9	10	9	7	8	8	7	6	7
Green Party	7	6	8	5	5	7	6	5	7	8	7	8	7	5
Independents/ Others	10	7	7	9	9	8	2	6	7	7	6	5	7	6

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

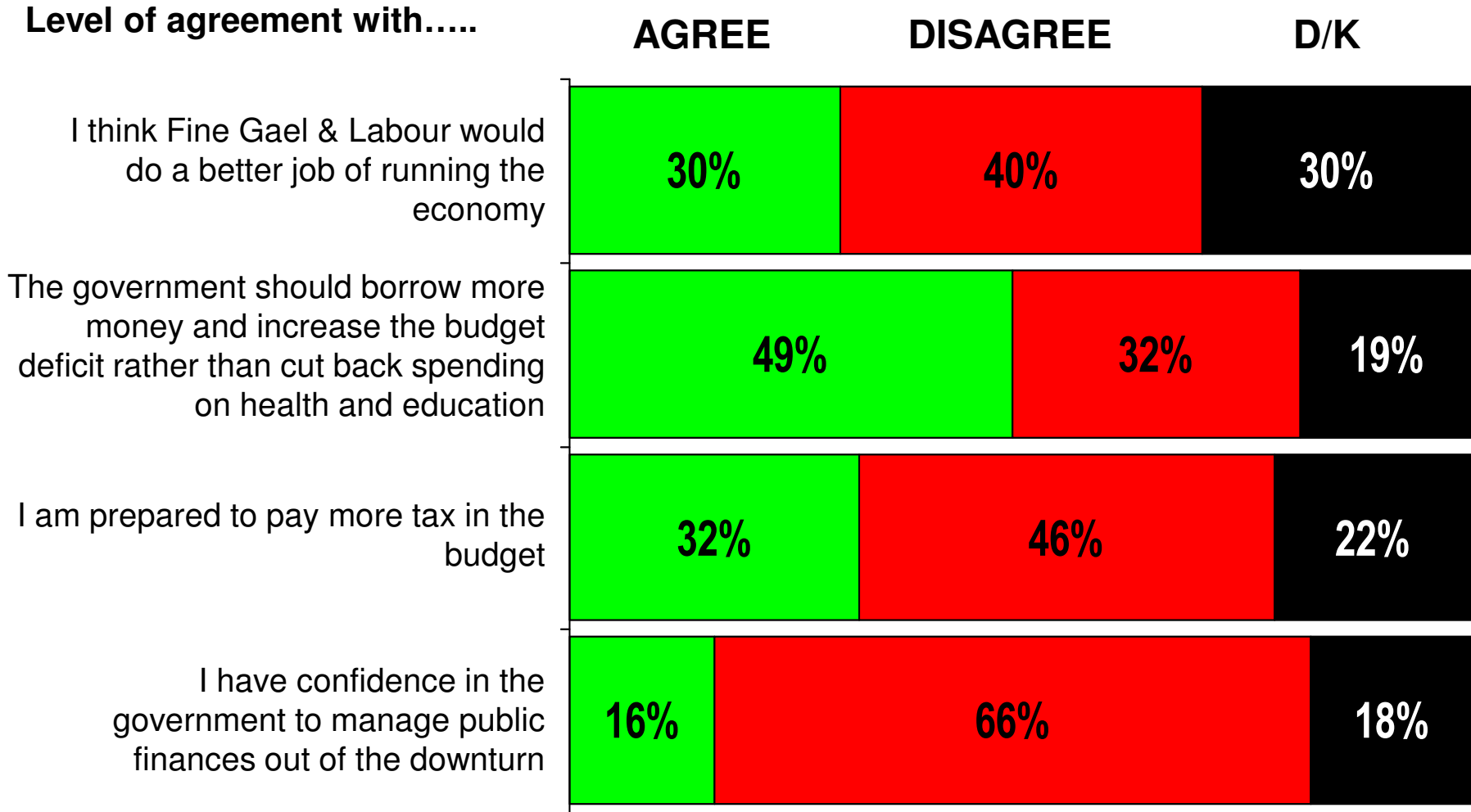


(Base: All IRISH CITIZENS 18+ likely to vote)



Attitudes to the Taxes and the Budget

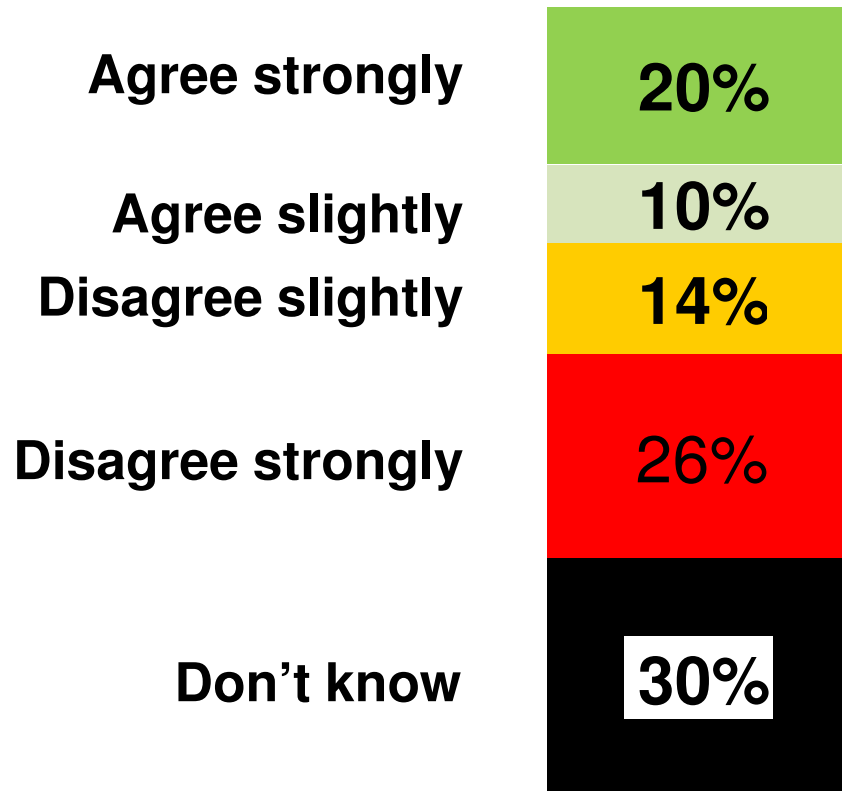
(Base: All adults 18+)



I think Fine Gael & Labour would do a better job of running the economy
(Base: All adults 18+)



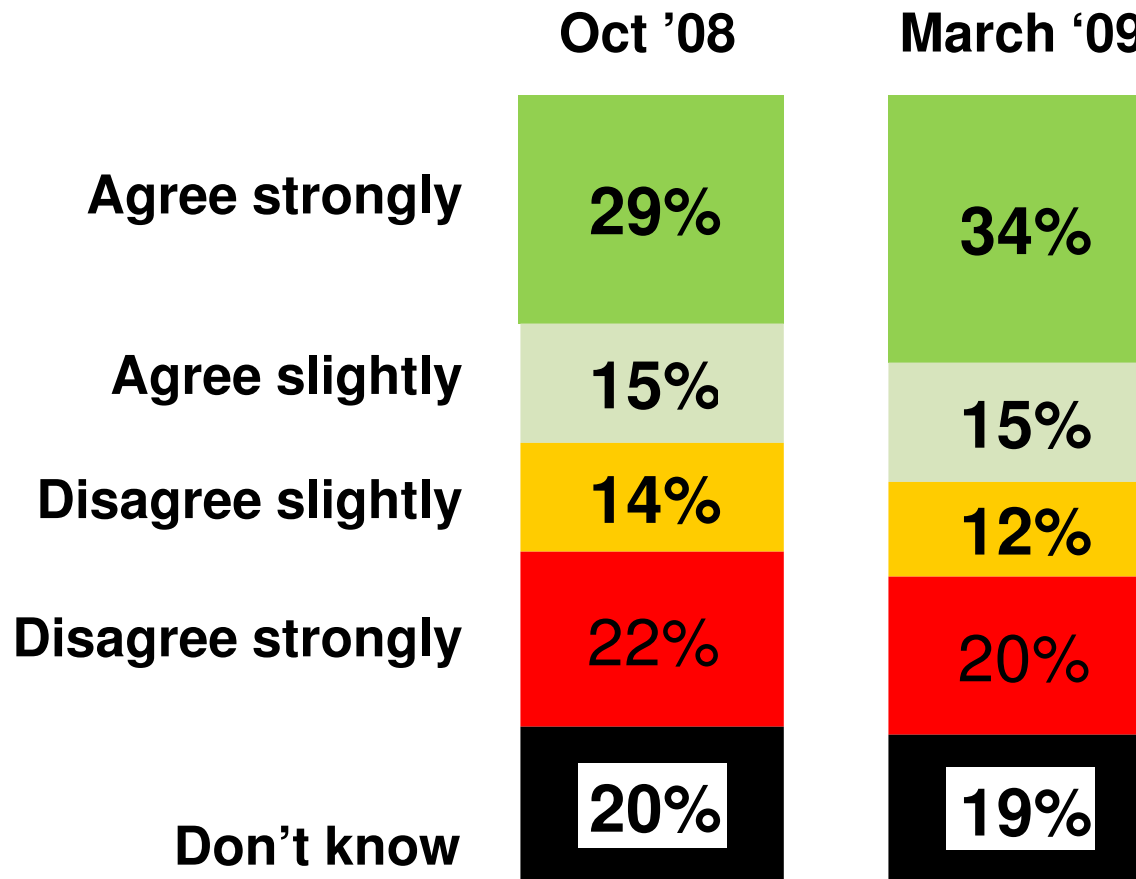
Mar '09



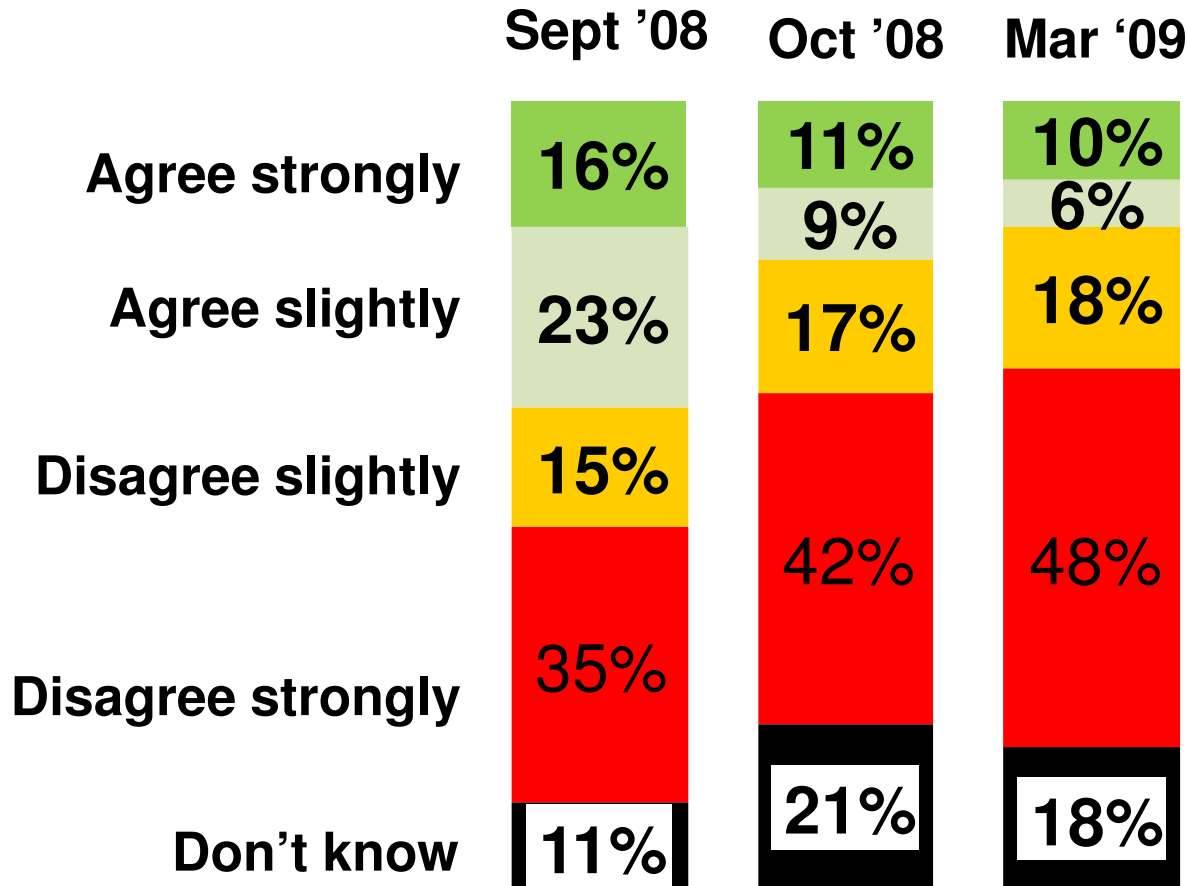
% Agree by Party Likely to Vote For	
	Mar '09
Total	30%
Fianna Fáil	17%
Fine Gael	53%
Labour	42%
Green	28%

The government should borrow more money and increase the budget deficit rather than cut back spending on health and education

(Base: All adults 18+)



I have confidence in the Government to manage the public finances out of the current downturn
(Base: All adults 18+)



% Disagree by party voted for at last election			
	Sep '08	Oct '08	Mar '09
Total	50%	59%	66%
Fianna Fáil	36%	47%	34%
Fine Gael	68%	73%	77%
Labour	67%	73%	82%
Green	57%	78%	74%