



Voting Intention Tracking Poll

Jan 2011

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



Methodology and Weighting

RED C interviewed a random sample of 1004 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 26th & 27th Jan 2011.

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

SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 30th January 2011 - Opinion Poll

Election 2011 – Runners & Riders

On Tuesday the Dail will be dissolved and the election campaign can start in earnest. So what does the wealth of data we have available from the monthly Sunday Business Post Tracking polls tell us about the likely outcome for each of the runners and riders, in a few weeks time?

Fianna Fail will do badly

One of the most consistent stories from the polls over the past two years, is the decline in the Fianna Fail vote. In today's poll the party secured 16% of the first preference vote. This is 26% less than they achieved at the last election. In the six months prior to the election campaign in 2007 their average support was at 38%. In the campaign itself they made "impressive" gains to take 42% share, only a rise of 4% above the average of the previous six months. Extrapolating these trends forward to now; even if the Martin factor gives the party a bounce and assuming some "shy voter" impact and some "local candidate" impact, it is unlikely that they can get hope to secure more than low 20's on Election Day.

Verdict – Somewhere between 16% and 22%, but evidence of the appeal of Martin suggests they could push this to the top end of the range with a good campaign.

Labour will make significant gains

At the last general election the Labour Party secured 10% of the vote, while in the last six polls before that election they had an average share in the polls of 12%. Move on four years and the average share for Labour in the most recent six polls has been 25%, which represents a significant rise in support for the party. However they have dropped off a bit in the last two polls, with 21% recorded this time, and did lose some support in the final run in to the last election. Extrapolating forward they should still secure close to double the first preference vote compared to 2007, and the fact that they are far more transfer friendly should give their seat to share ratio a boost. However, there is evidence from the by-election in Donegal prior to Christmas that indicates that the Labour first preference vote in polls could be a little more "flaky" than for other parties. Also, the impact of Gilmore may not be as strong a card to play, with Martin now rated ahead of him as a preferred Taoiseach.

Verdict – This is the toughest to call as their vote is so volatile – so somewhere between high teens and mid twenties.

Fine Gael are most likely to lead the next government

Fine Gael support has been trending up for the past few weeks, but this has come to halt now, as they drop back to 33% in today's poll. In the past 6 months support for the party has been on average 33%. This is 9% higher than the average seen for the party before the last general election in 2007. During the campaign itself in 2007, their support firmed up to reach 27% overall.

Fine Gael does however have two key issue areas that may limit support. The first is that Enda Kenny remains a "turn off" for some voters, lying in third place behind Martin & Gilmore as preferred Taoiseach. As he gets increased exposure during the campaign, this may depress support for the party. The second is that the party still has something of a problem convincing people that they can really manage the economy from its current poor position.

Verdict – I suspect that support they will end up with somewhere between low and mid 30's.

Sinn Fein could do better than expected

The success of Pearse Doherty in the Donegal by election has improved the image of Sinn Fein in the minds of many voters. This has led to an increase in the polls, with them securing 13% today. The main issue for the party is that those who say they may vote Sinn Fein, have historically fallen away on Election Day; either from getting cold feet closer to the time, or simply being less likely to bother going out to vote at all.

In the 2007 General Election the party polled 9% on average in the six months before the campaign, but ended up with 7%. If the party sees a similar fall off this year, it still may end up with about 11% share of first preference, a significant improvement on 2007. However the party is still held quite negatively by a large proportion of voters who claim there is no chance they would vote for them, and the support they have may be squeezed if Fianna Fail make gains.

Verdict – will probably do better than 2007, but closer to 10% share

Green Party may not have any TD's

The average Green Party share of the first preference vote over the past six months is 3%. This is a significant decline for the party compared to 2007. The party polled on average at 8% over the last six months before the campaign started in 2007, they then dropped off to about 6% during the campaign, and ended up on 5% first preference. The party cannot afford the same decline in support from a 3% start point, particularly as they have also become far less transfer friendly even from Fianna Fail voters during their time in government. This makes it far harder for even their high profile candidates to get elected.

Verdict - some very tight battles for final seats in constituencies, possibly 2-3 seats - but possibly none, with high profile independents fighting against them.

Independents will prosper in pockets

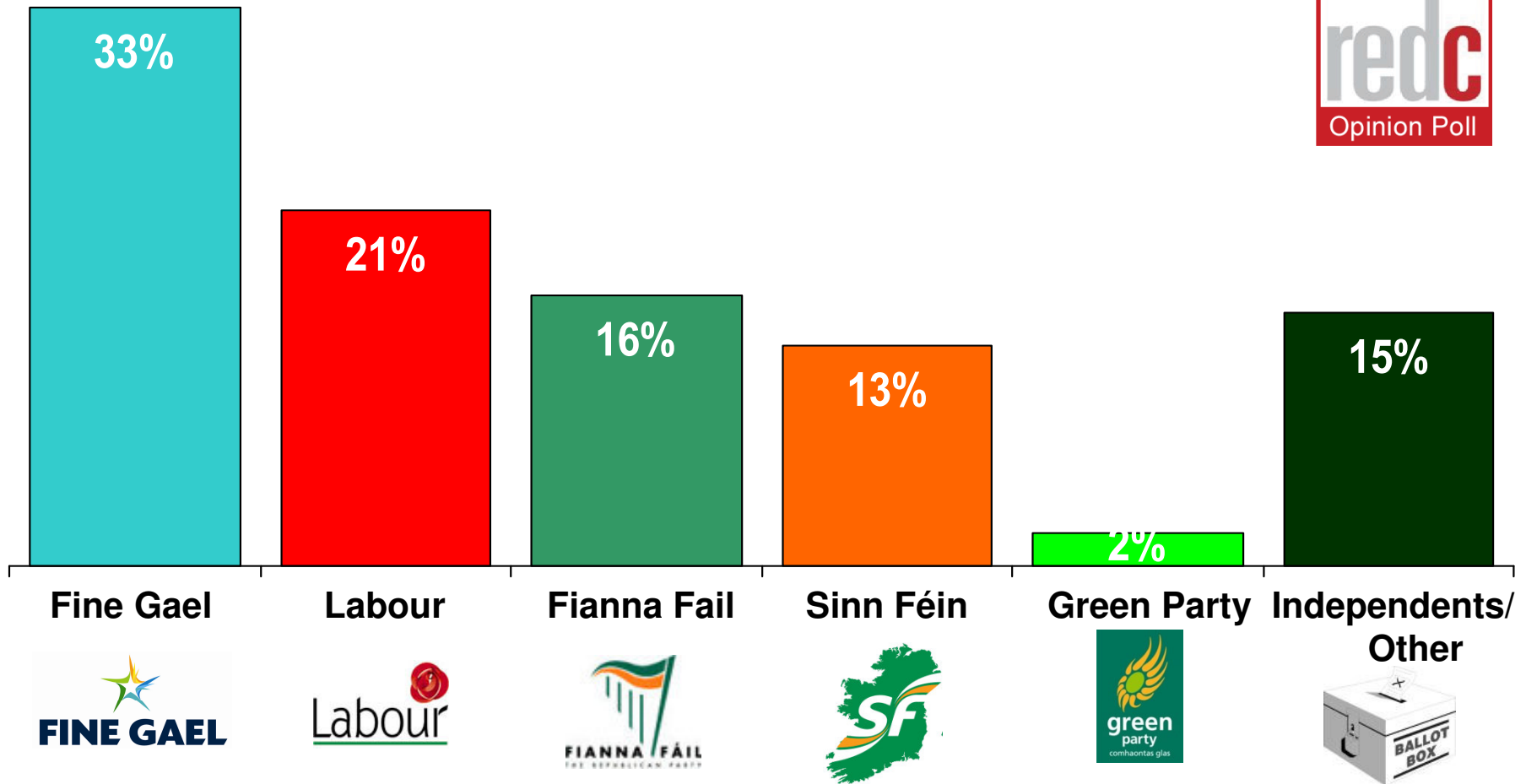
There is a lot of talk that Independent candidates will do particularly well this year, as a disenfranchised electorate vote for people outside of the party system. Our latest polls appear to back this up, with 15% support in today's poll, and an average of 11% over the last six months. This is a significant improvement when compared to the 7% average share they received in the six weeks prior to the last General Election campaign. Independents didn't lose traction during the campaign in 2007, but they may lose out a bit if Fianna Fail make some gains.

Verdict - with new high profile candidates such as Shane Ross and Paul Somerville running, we are likely to see more independent candidate seats in the next Dail.

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

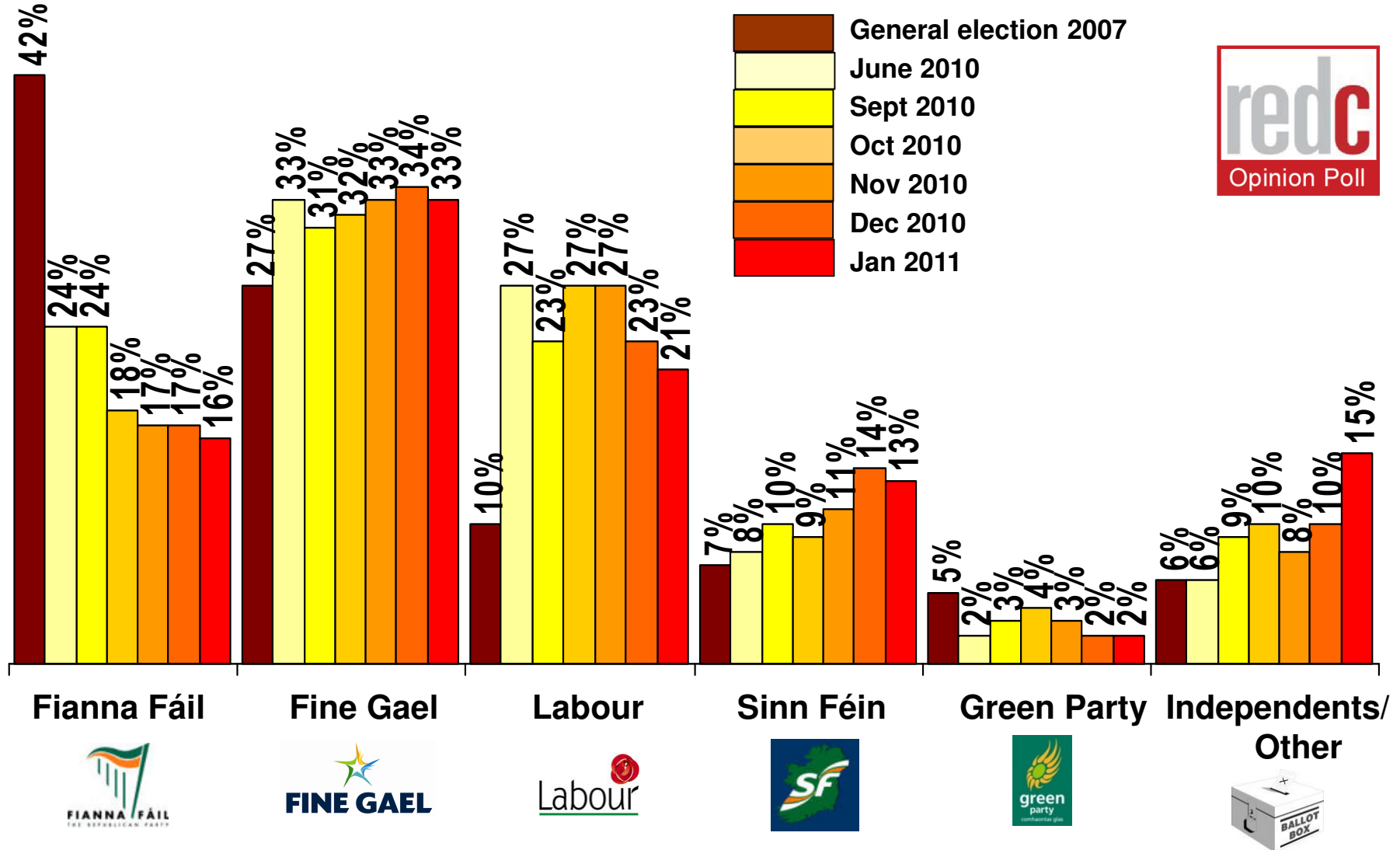
(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)

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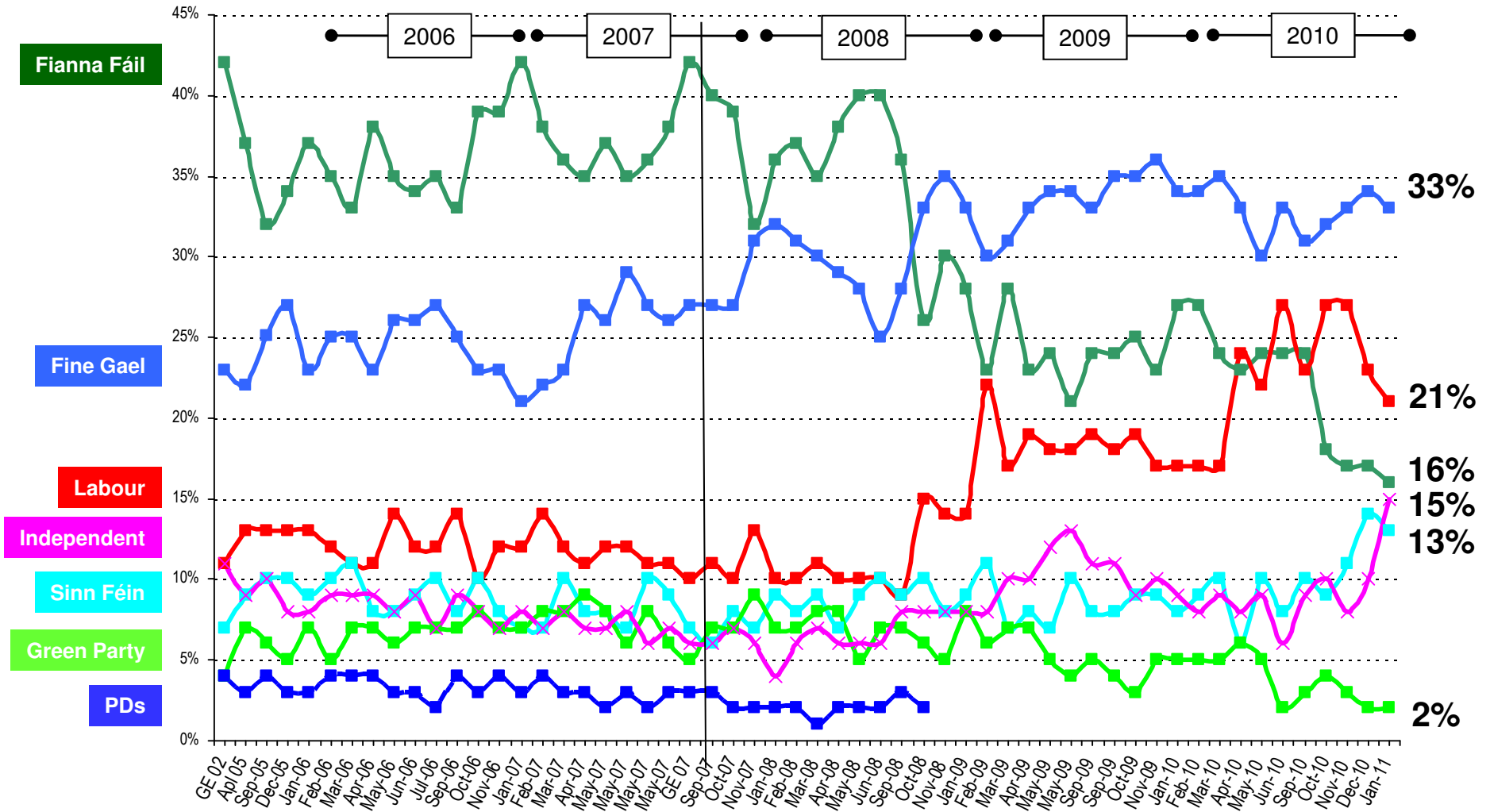
CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures 30th Jan 2011	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	26	33	27
Labour	17	21	10
Fianna Fáil	13	16	42
Sinn Féin	10	13	7
Green Party	2	2	5
Independents/ Others	12	15	6
Undecided	20		

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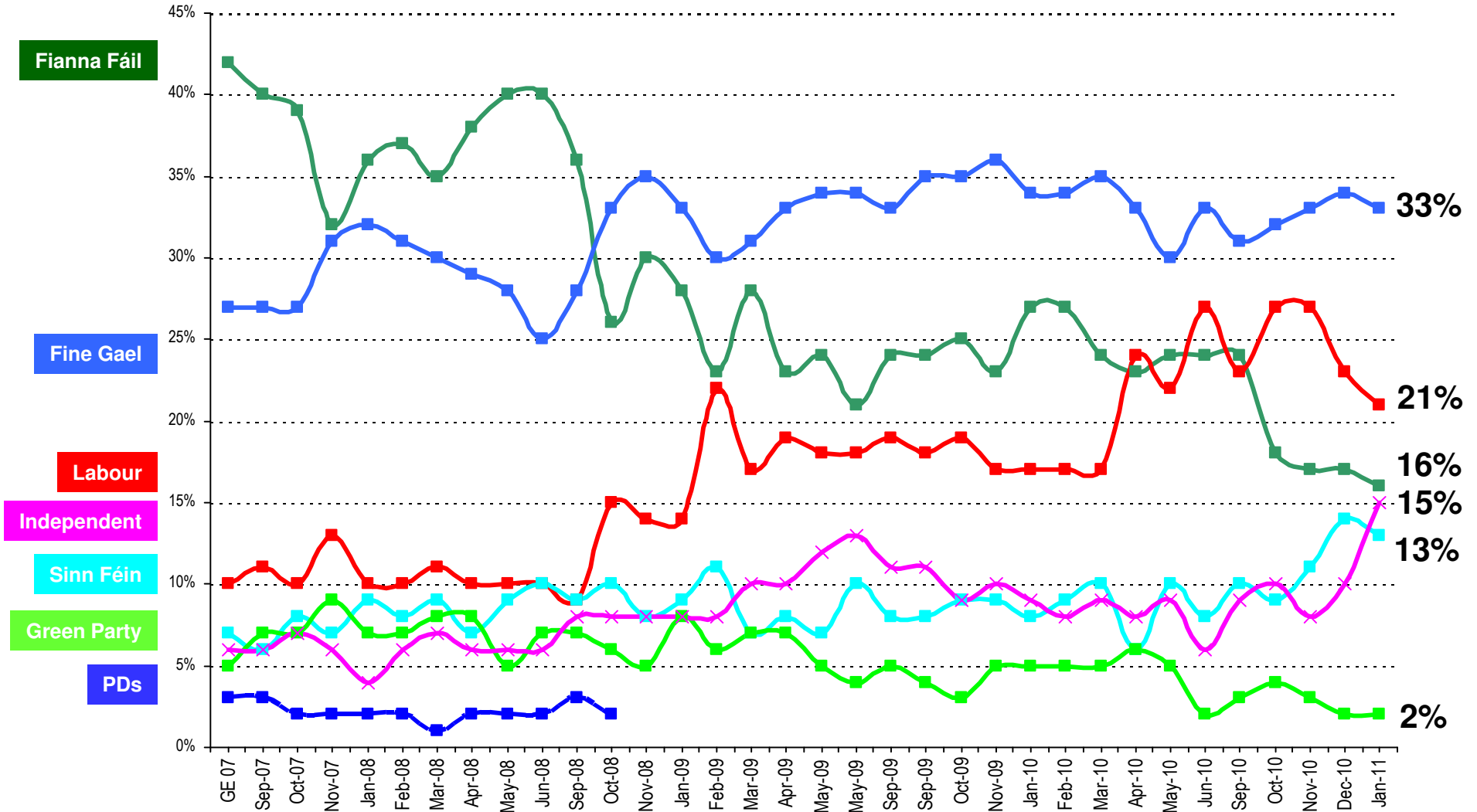


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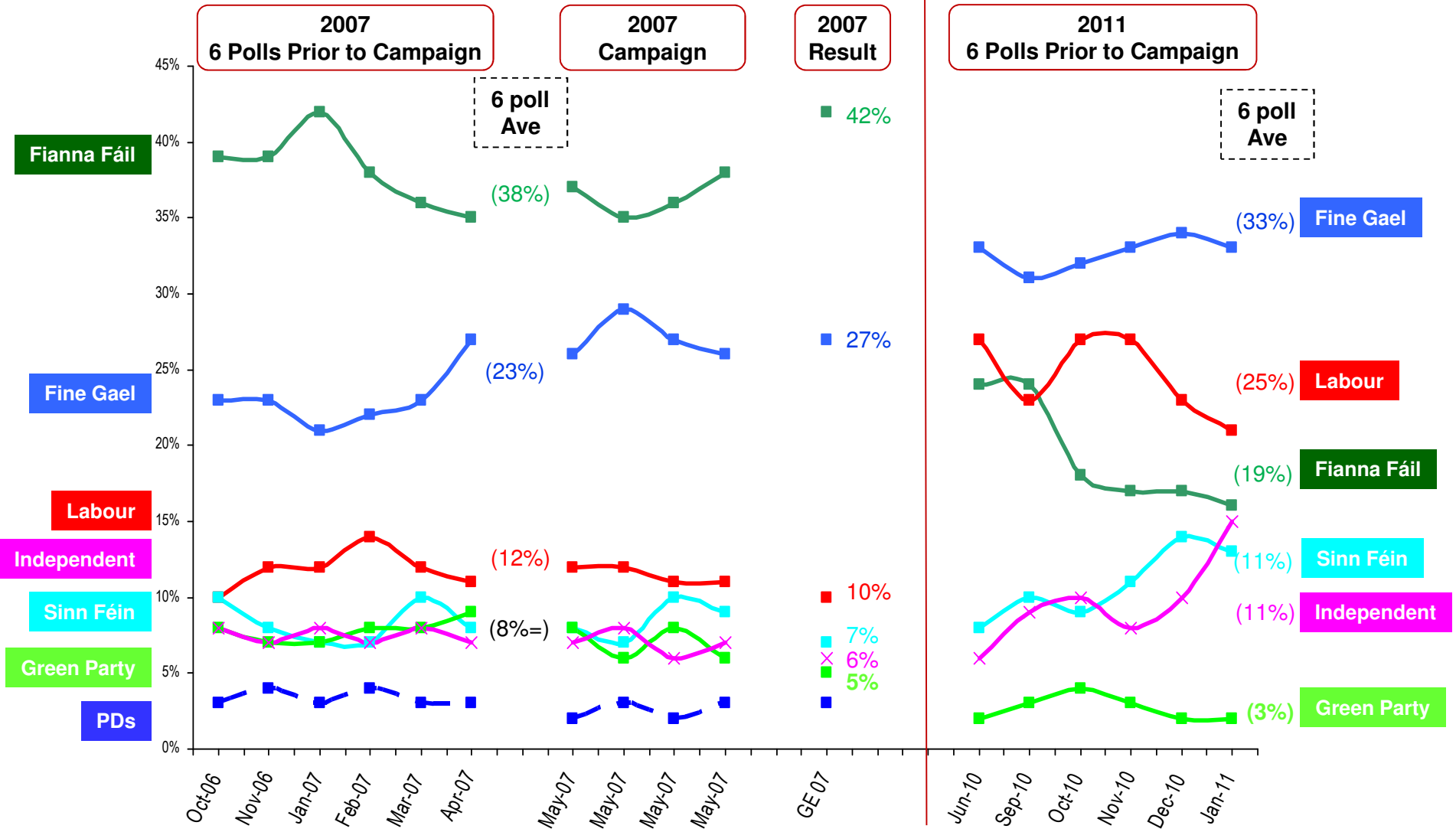


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First Preference Vote Share – 2007 vs. 2011?

(Base: All adults 18+)



Spiral of Silence Allocation of Undecided Voters.

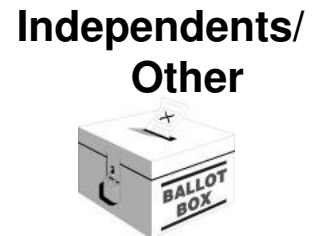
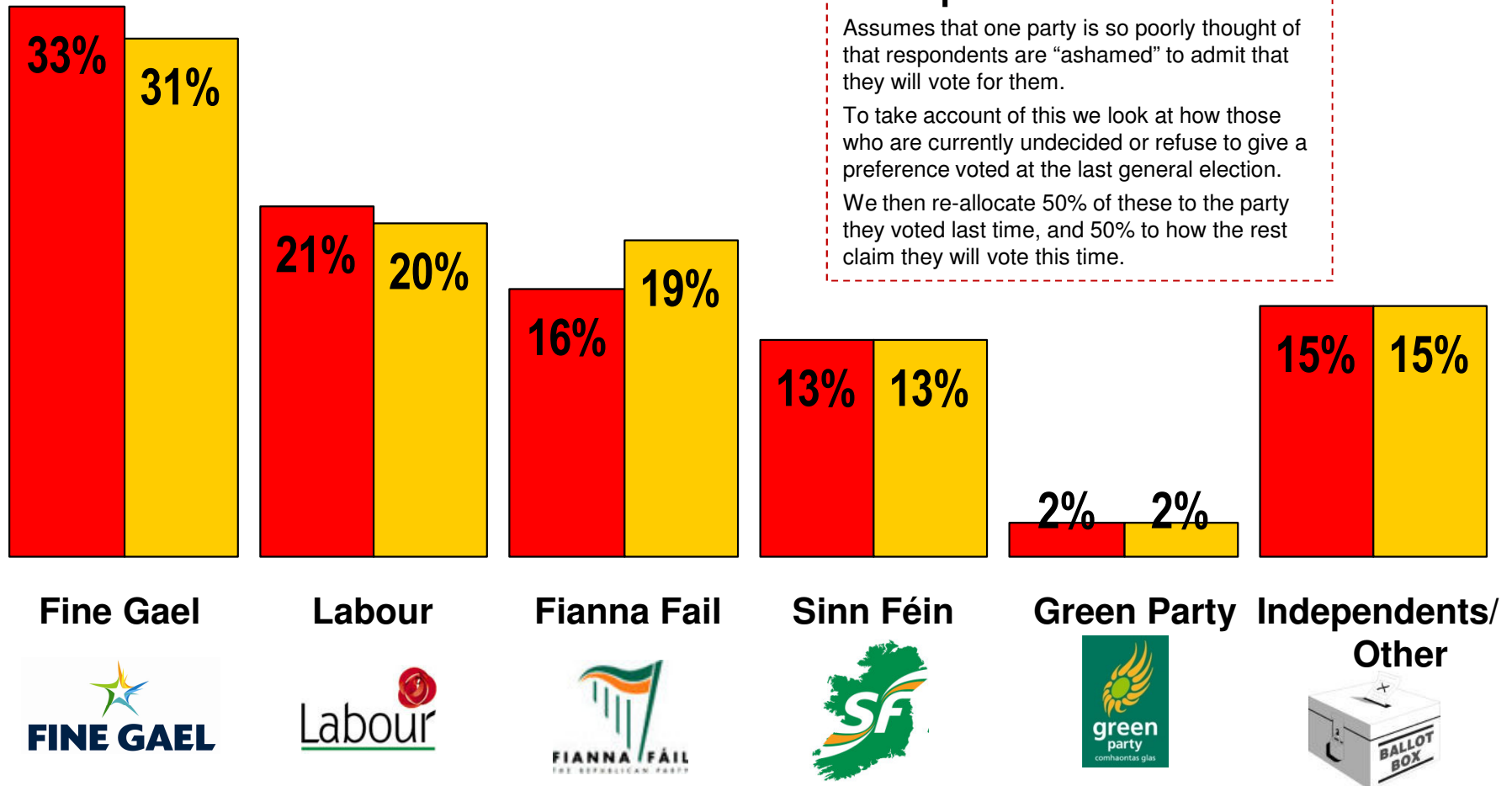
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■ Normal D/K allocation ■ Past Vote weighted D/K Allocation

The Spiral of Silence
 Assumes that one party is so poorly thought of that respondents are “ashamed” to admit that they will vote for them.
 To take account of this we look at how those who are currently undecided or refuse to give a preference voted at the last general election. We then re-allocate 50% of these to the party they voted last time, and 50% to how the rest claim they will vote this time.

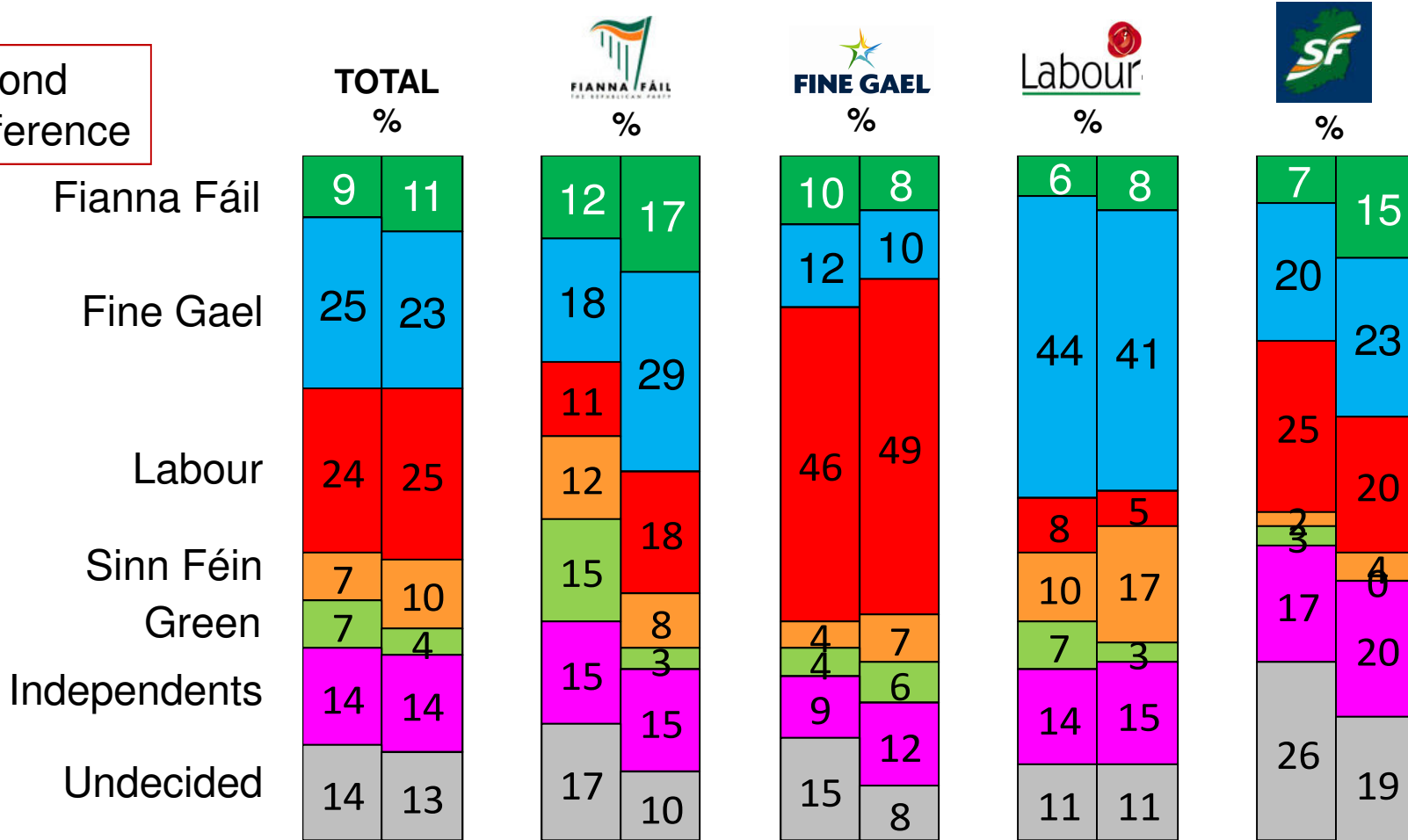


Second Preference among First preference voters



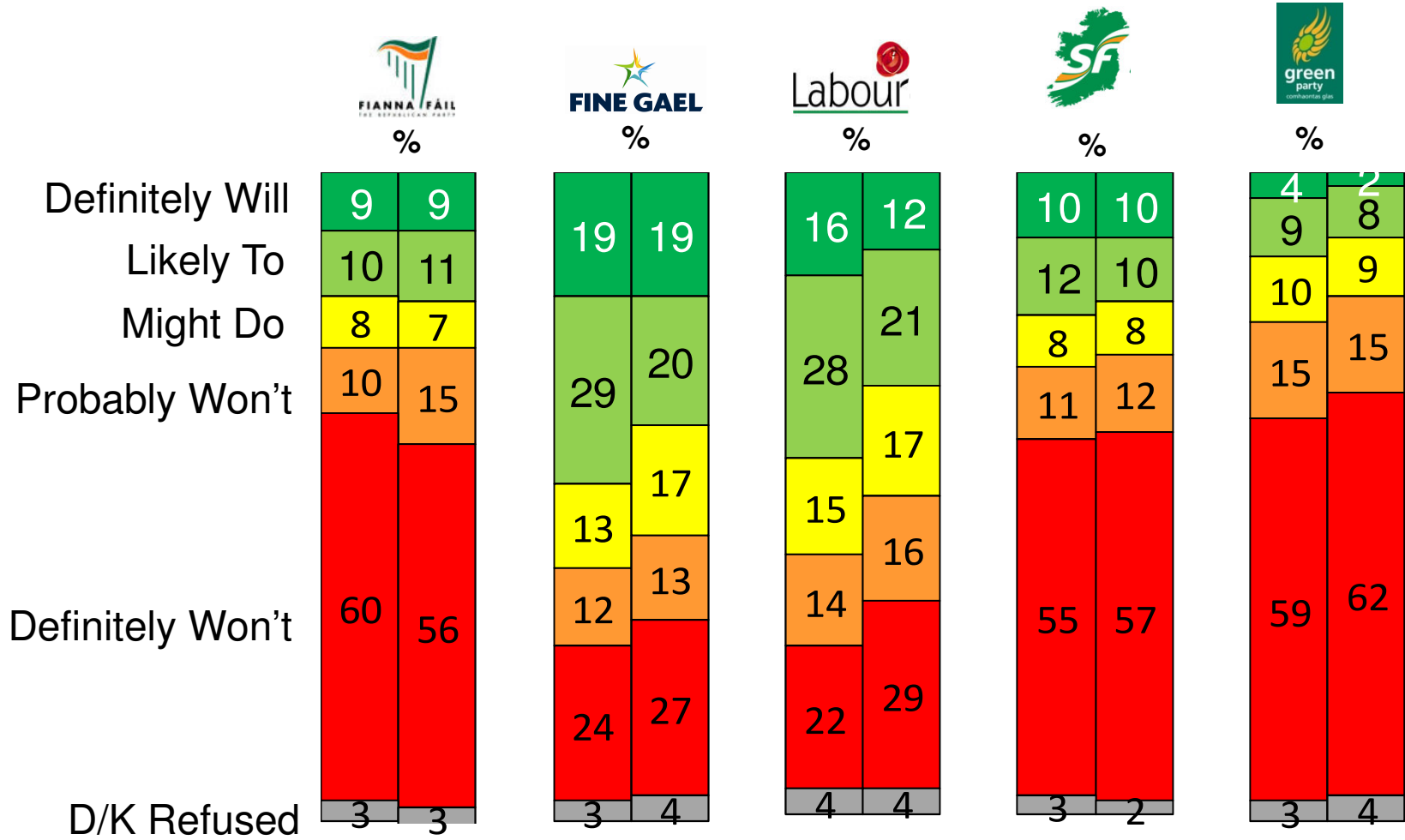
First Preference

Second Preference



Attitude to 1st Preference Voting for this Party at Next General Election

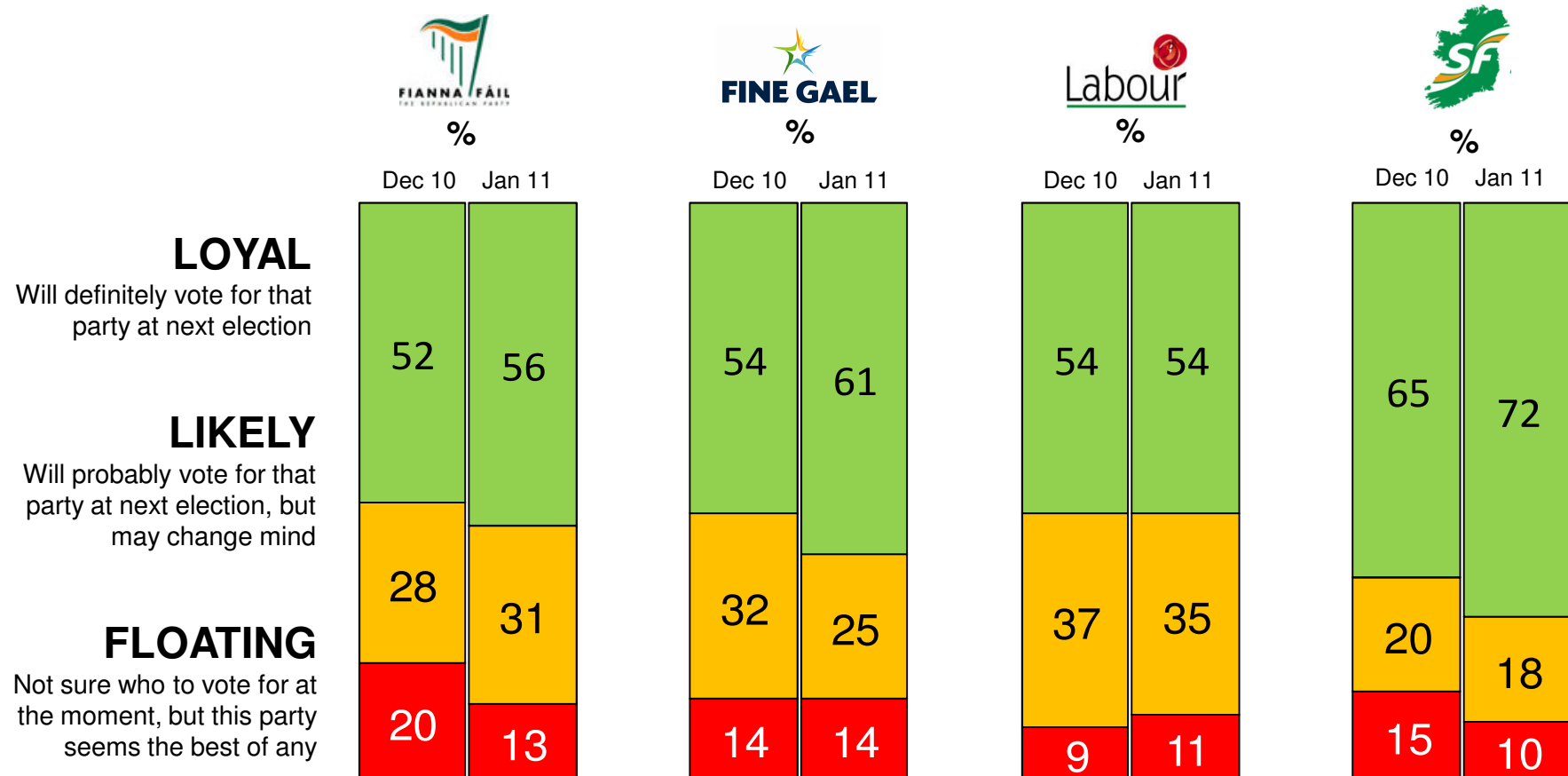
(Base: All Adults Likely to Vote – 900)



Strength of loyalty/disposition among claimed voters for each of the main parties



Party 1st Preference



Best Taoiseach after Next General Election

Q. Irrespective of which party you support, which of the main party leaders do you believe would make the best Taoiseach for Ireland after the next general election?

(Base: All Adults 18+ Years – 1,000)

