



# Voting Intention Tracking Poll

Feb 2011

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

# Methodology and Weighting



RED C interviewed a random sample of 1013 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 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 – 6<sup>th</sup> Feb - Opinion Poll**

### **The Fight for Floating voters**

Do you wonder why Fine Gael and Labour are tearing chunks out of each other in the campaign so far, when they appear most likely to be coalition partners? The reason becomes clear, when we look more closely at the number of voters that remain undecided about how they will vote at the election.

At this point of the campaign in 2007 a large proportion of voters had made up their minds. Our polls before the election in 2007, recorded about 15% of all voters undecided three weeks out from Election Day. Today we still have 20% who are definitely undecided, while just 65% claim to have “made up their mind” already. On further examination, even some of those who suggest they have decided; still say they could change their mind between now and the election. That means that somewhere between 35% and 40% of all voters that claim they will vote on Election Day are still up for grabs.

This means that all parties still have an awful lot to play for. No surprise really; when you consider that Fianna Fail has historically held 35%-42% share of the vote, and is currently languishing on 17% in today’s poll. This means that more than 20% of past Fianna Fail voters are looking for a new home, on top of those that change who they vote for at each election. Many are determined not to vote for Fianna Fail again, but at the same time a large number come from families that have “always” voted Fianna Fail, and they have no real connection with any of the other parties. That is why over the past 6-9 months we have seen them move from one party to another, struggling to find a home.

During 2010 more and more of these voters suggested they would give Labour their support, with the party securing an unheard of first preference vote share in the polls at 27%. Many of these voters still remain with Labour, but as the election draws near some have begun to fall away again, perhaps unsure of this choice. Then, after the Donegal by-election some decided Sinn Fein was an option, resulting in a significant bounce in support for the party. But again, though some have stayed with Sinn Fein, others have left again. More recently the Independent candidates saw a rise in support, as the disaffected Fianna Fail voters continued to look for a home; but once again, as it became apparent that not everyone would have a celebrity Independent candidate to support, that too has fallen back again.

## The Fight for Floating voters (contd)

Come Election Day, it is quite possible that some of these lost Fianna Fail voters may end up going back to the party. The fresh face of Micheal Martin as leader and his new team, perhaps gives once loyal Fianna Fail families the excuse they need to vote for the party again, despite all that has gone on. While for others, the weight of family tradition, or simply because they want to support the local candidates on the ground, means they may end up voting Fianna Fail again despite their reservations. But this move back to Fianna Fail is likely to be limited to the diehard supporters who only left the party in the last few months. As such we can expect the most that Fianna Fail can gain from this is to take their share up to the low to mid 20's.

The reality however is that a huge number of these undecided voters are trying to decide between voting for either Fine Gael or Labour. In fact the cross over between the two parties is so large that 40% of all of those that say they might vote Fine Gael, also say that they might vote Labour. In reverse the figure is even greater with 50% of all those that say they might vote Labour, also saying they may give Fine Gael their first preference.

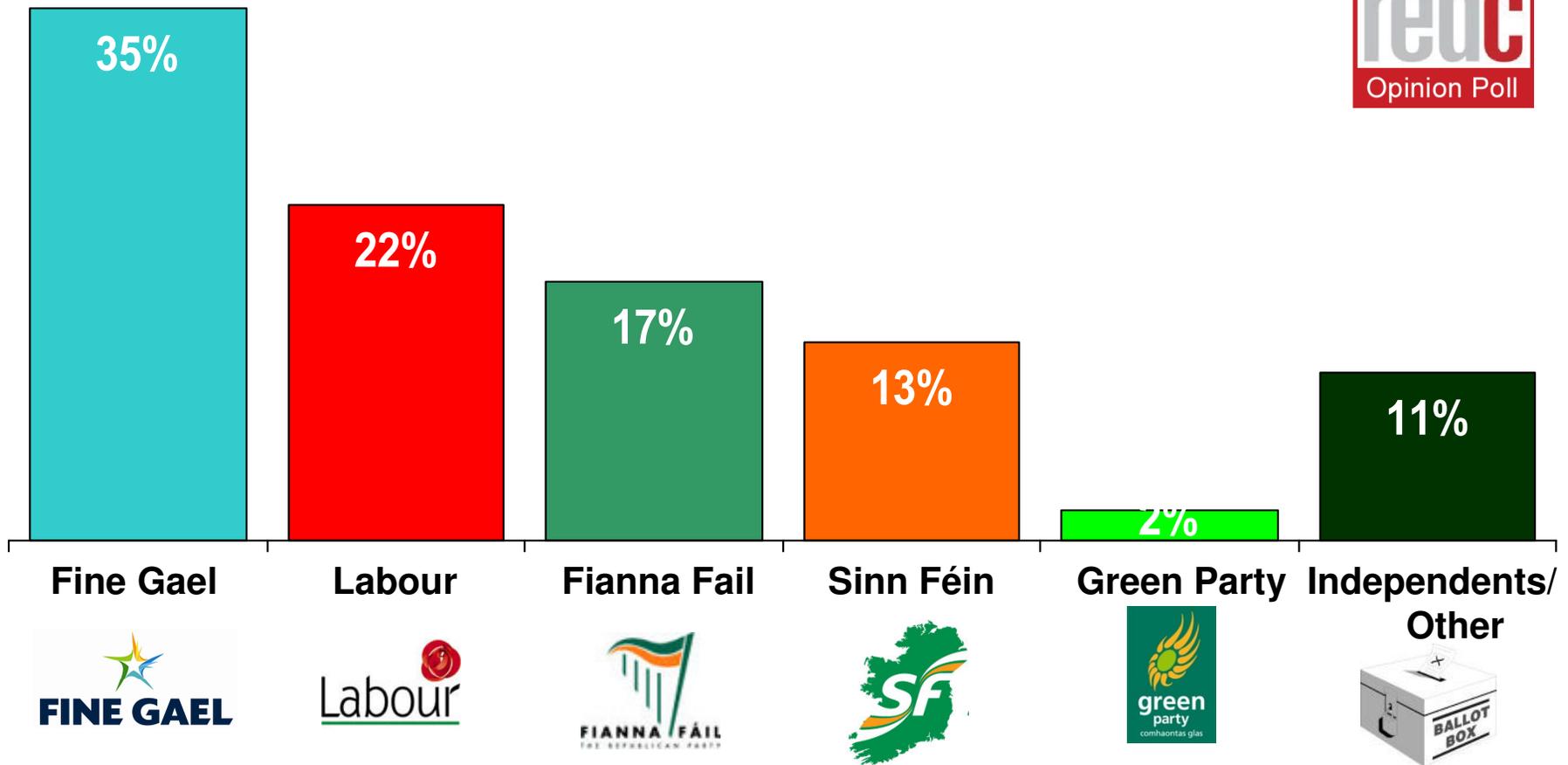
If Fine Gael can win a large proportion of these undecided voters over, they could conceivably form a government with just the support of a few like minded Independent candidates. Of course this would be a disaster for Labour, having done so well in the polls up to now, so they too are desperate to secure the undecided voter support. After all, the more of these floating voters they persuade to support the party on election day, the stronger voice they would have in a likely coalition.

So now you see why Fine Gael and Labour are fighting each other so hard. Because it is the battle between these two parties that will define the election, and ultimately the shape of the next government.

# 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+)

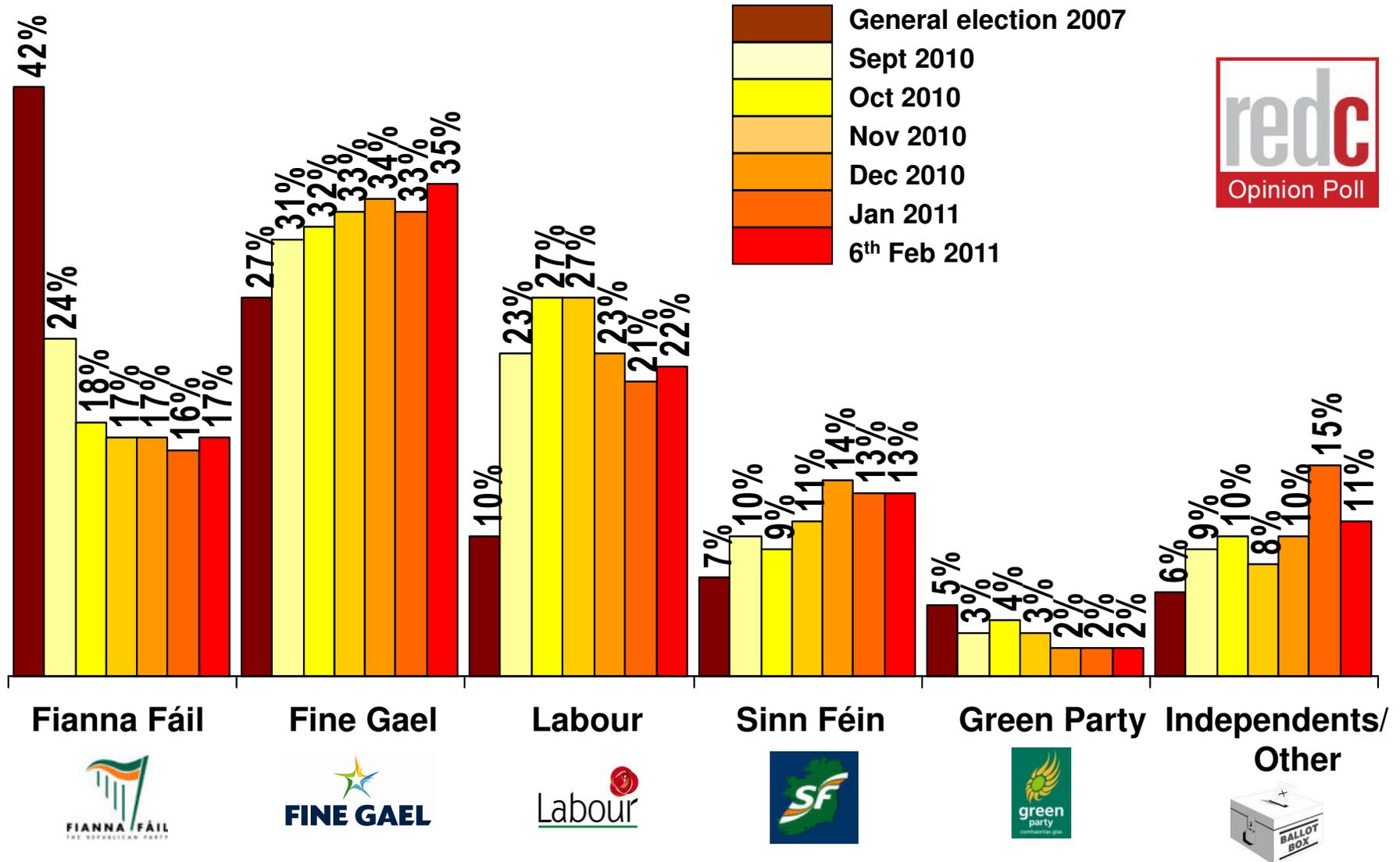
THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST  
IRELAND'S FINANCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEWSPAPER



# 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+)

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



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+)



<b>CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT</b>			
	<b>Core figures 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011</b>	<b>Excluding undecided</b>	<b>2007 Election Results</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Fine Gael</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Independents/ Others</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>20</b>		

# Spiral of Silence Allocation of Undecided Voters.

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+)



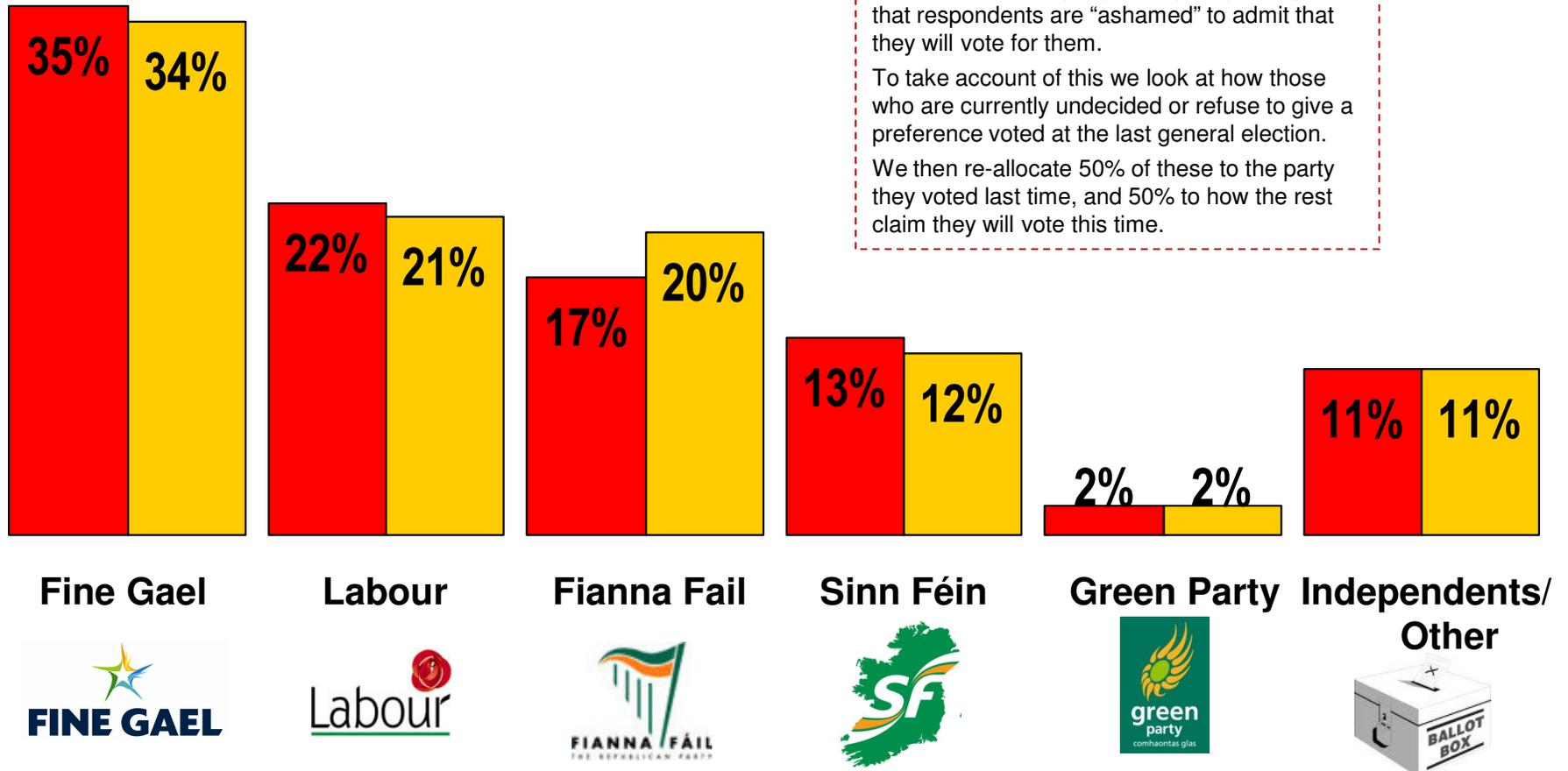
■ Normal D/K allocation ■ Past Vote weighted D/K Allocation

## 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.

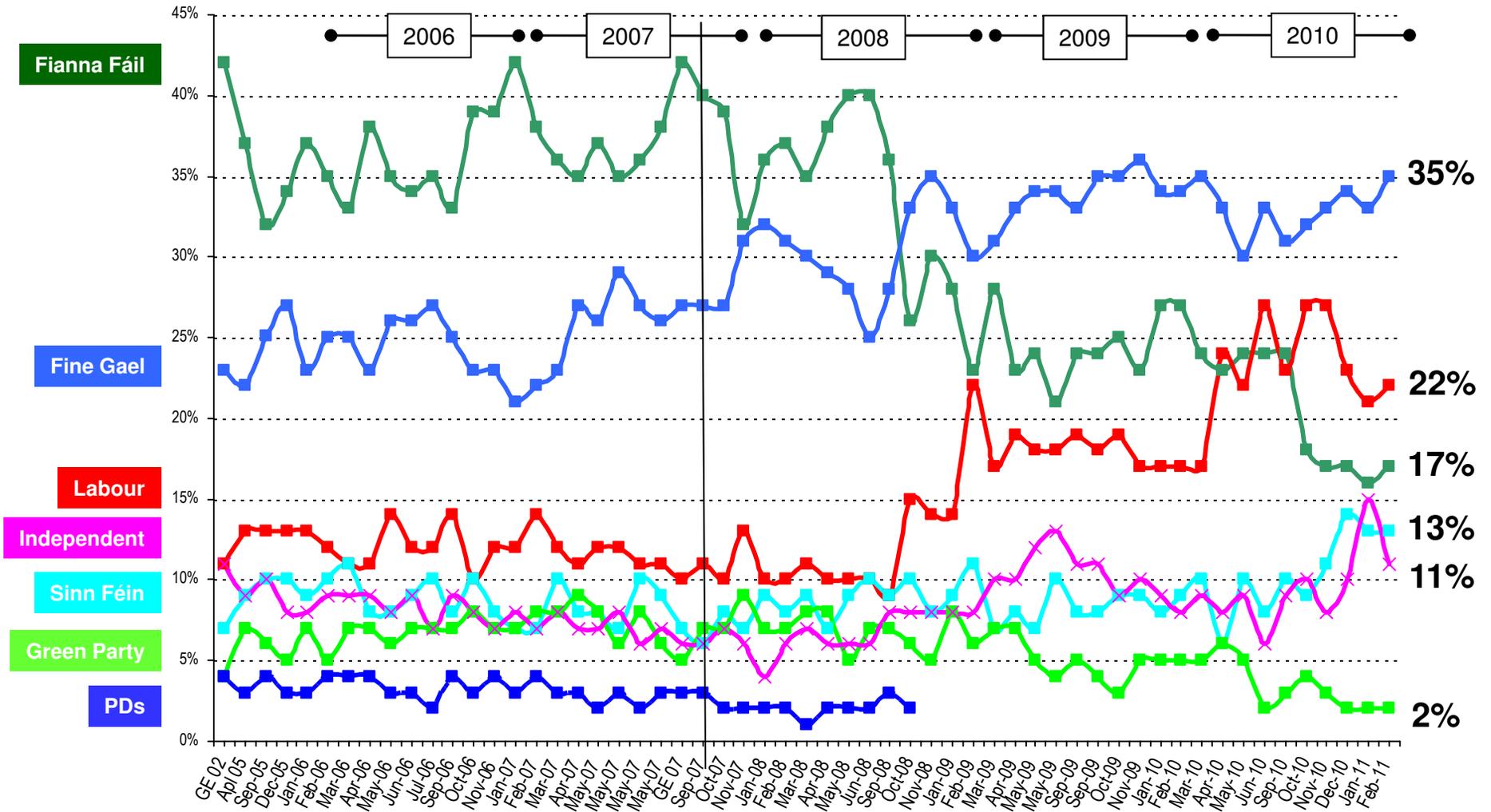


# If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



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

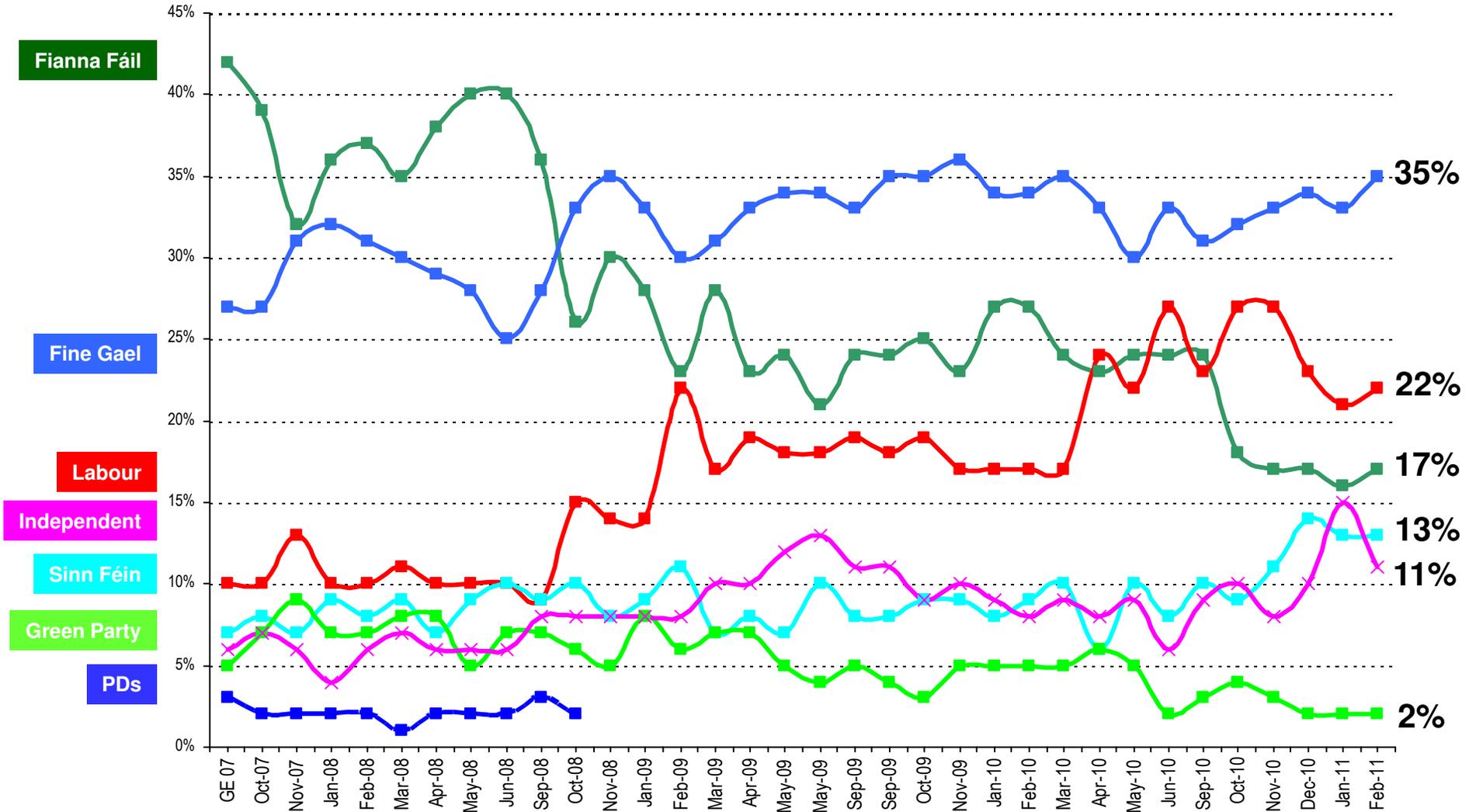


# If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



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

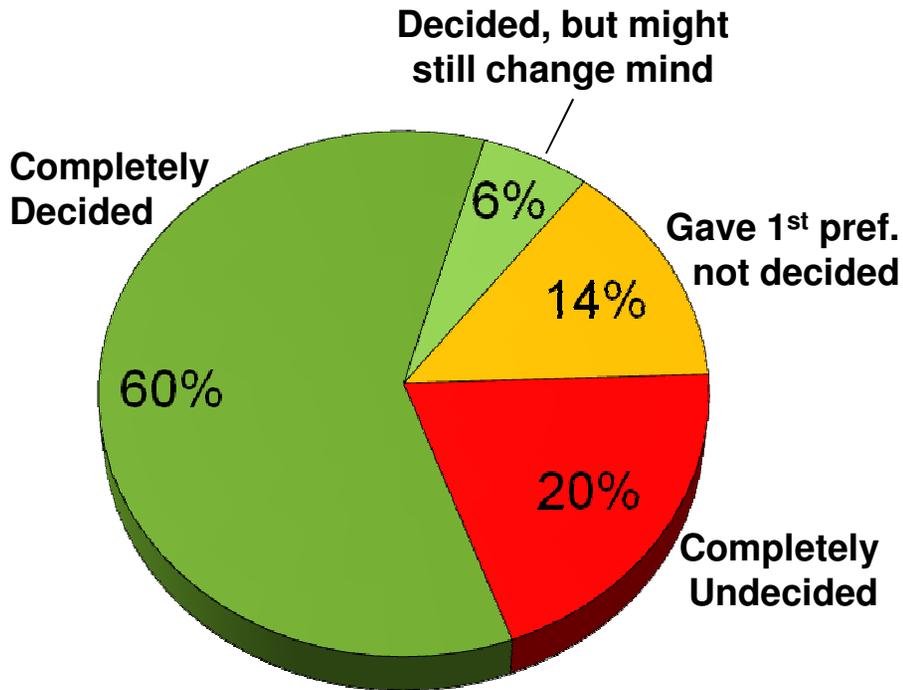




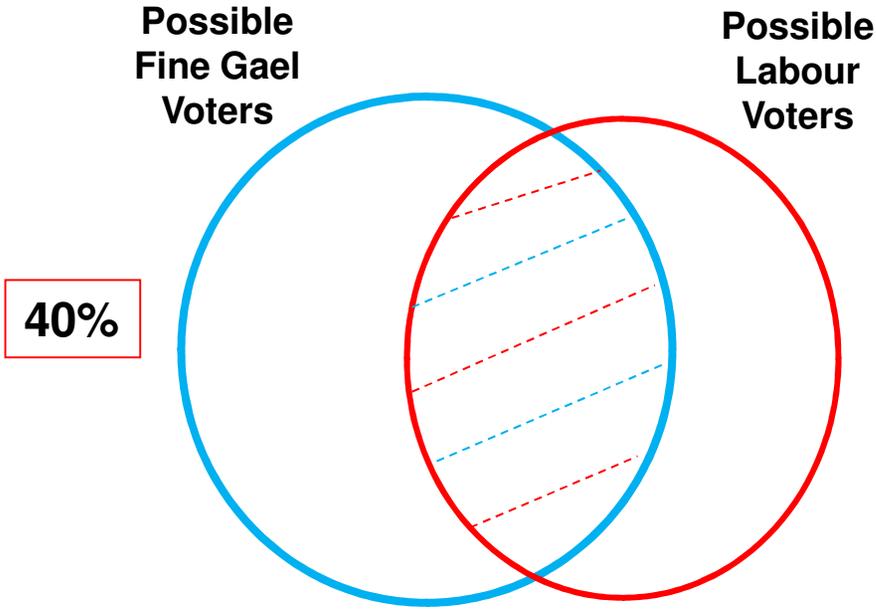
# The Battle for Floating Voters



Have voters made up their minds?



Cross over of possible voters between Fine Gael & Labour

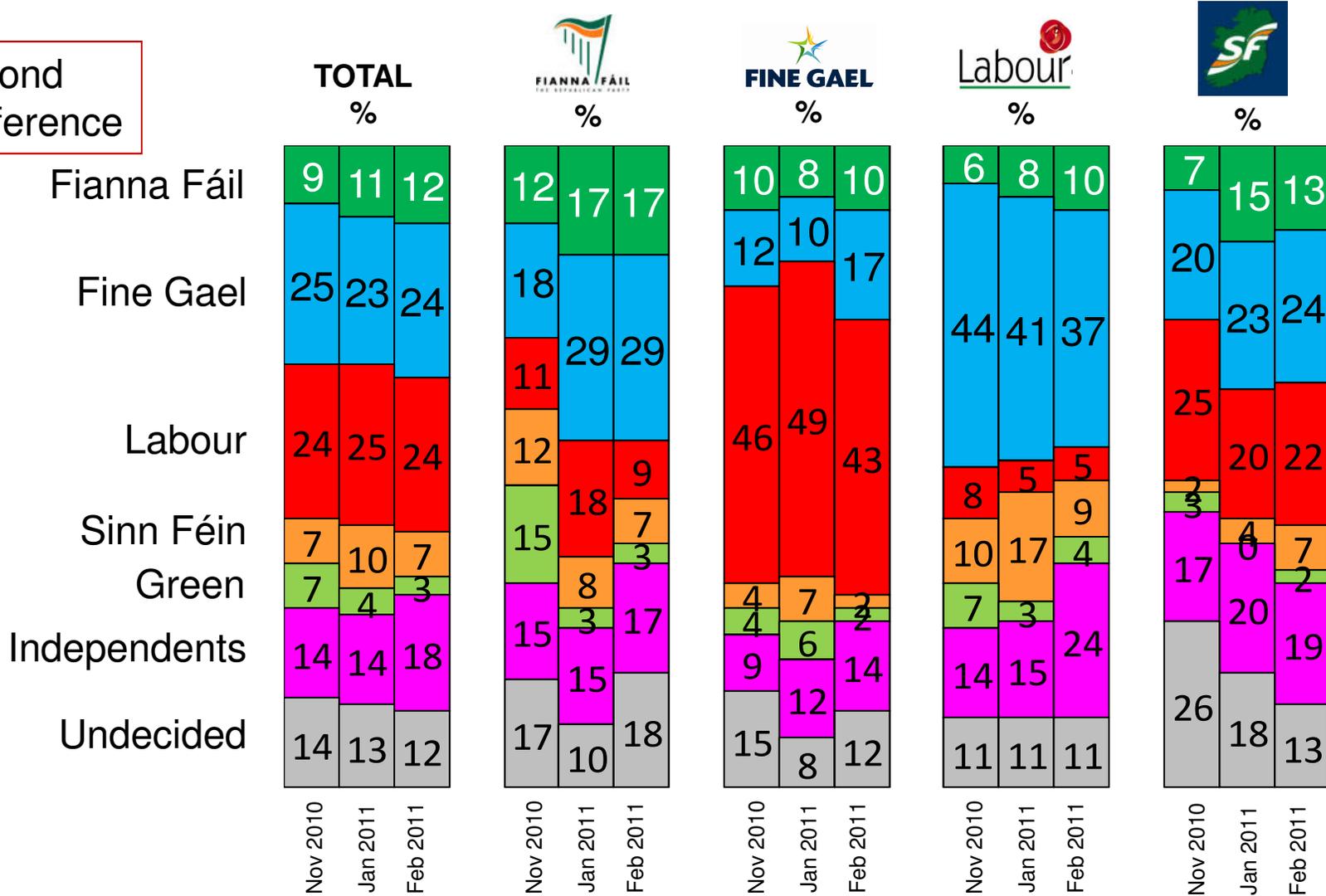


# Second Preference among First preference voters



First Preference

Second Preference



# Attitude to 1<sup>st</sup> Preference Voting for this Party at Next General Election

(Base: All Adults Likely to Vote – 913)



%



%



%



%



%

