



General Election Opinion Poll

25th March 2012

Prepared for:

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

Job No: 48911

Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1012 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 19th to 21st March 2012.
- 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.
- 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.
- Finally, some people tell RED C that they intend to vote, and have a good past voting record, but say they don't know who they would vote for or refuse to answer the question. Whenever such people say which party they voted for in the last election, RED C ascribe 50% to the party they voted for previously. We have seen from analysis of past elections that this is the most likely outcome and this reallocation tries to overcome the effect of the “spiral of silence” where voters are do not want to admit who they will vote for.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

Talk of possible bailout deal make Fine Gael more attractive, while 60% state they will vote Yes in EU Treaty



The big change in today's Sunday Business Post/ RED C poll, taken before the findings of the Mahon Tribunal were announced and conducted just three weeks since the last poll, is the strong gains seen for Fine Gael. It appears that a few weeks of relatively good news stories surrounding the deferral of the bailout payment, positive noises about the economy in general and St Patricks day events has led some voters to return to the party. Fine Gael secure 34% of the first preference votes in today's poll, a rise in support of 4% in just three weeks.

It appears that these gains have come at the expense of Independent candidate support, which drops to 17% this month. This is a fall of 2% in three weeks and 5% since November last year. Over the last few months we have seen support drift from Fine Gael, with most of those who left the party appearing to shift their support to Independent candidates. This is a relatively common occurrence in between elections, where the party in power loses support while the first to gain are Independents who pick up support among those who are unsure of how they will vote.

On top of returning voters, the party has also made some gains from past Independent voters and past Fianna Fail voters. Further analysis of the gains suggest that the party has made them among the 25-44 year old age groups, and also particularly in Dublin.

The gains seen for Fine Gael have no noticeable impact on Sinn Fein, who secure the next highest first preference vote of 18% for the second month in a row. The difference this month is that there appears to be slightly more clear water between Sinn Fein in second place and Fianna Fail and Labour behind them, who both lose support.

Talk of possible bailout deal make Fine Gael more attractive, while 60% state they will vote Yes in EU Treaty



Labour does not benefit from the good news stories that their partner in government appears to have gained from. Support for the party actually falls back 1% in the last three weeks, leaving them securing 15% of the first preference vote. This will be disappointing for the party after gains last month, but is pretty much where the party support has been since November last year.

Fianna Fail support also falls back in today's poll. Again the drop is small at just 1%, but this is the second month in a row that they have lost support and does suggest something of a downwards trend. This is also before the findings of the Mahon tribunal were released which may cause more problems for the party in voters eyes.

More good news for the government parties is the fact that the EU Treaty referendum still appears to be relatively well placed to be passed at this stage, if not completely secure. The main change in voter attitudes in today's poll appears to be that more voters have made up their mind how they think they will vote, with the undecided voters down from 1 in 4 three weeks ago to closer to 1 in 5 in today.

This has led to gains in support for both the Yes and No side, but it is the No vote that takes the bigger share of those who have now made up their mind. This should give heart to the No camp, as it does suggest that there is an opportunity to persuade undecided voters to vote No and make the contest closer.

Based on these gains we are left with 46% stating they will vote Yes, 36% stating they will vote No and 19% still undecided. This translates to 56% Yes and 44% No when the undecided voters are excluded. This represents a shift of 4% overall, away from the Yes towards the No vote, and suggests to a tighter race than had been suggested a week ago.

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However, in today's poll we also included likelihood to vote question for the referendum, in the same manner that we use for party vote intention polling. When we undertake analysis based on this likelihood to vote question, this suggests that many of those that now say they will vote No, will probably not vote at all. This is true to the extent that when we run the referendum poll by those that are likely to vote, all the gains seen for the No side are lost again.

The final poll results when analysed by likely voters, leaves us with 49% stating they will vote yes, 33% stating they will vote No, and 18% undecided. Excluding undecided voters this suggests that the referendum would pass by 60% Yes to 40% No. – perhaps a more secure position for the Yes camp.

Overall it does still appear that the likely results at the moment remains that the referendum will be passed, but the Yes camp should not get complacent based on the shifts seen today among the previously undecided voters.

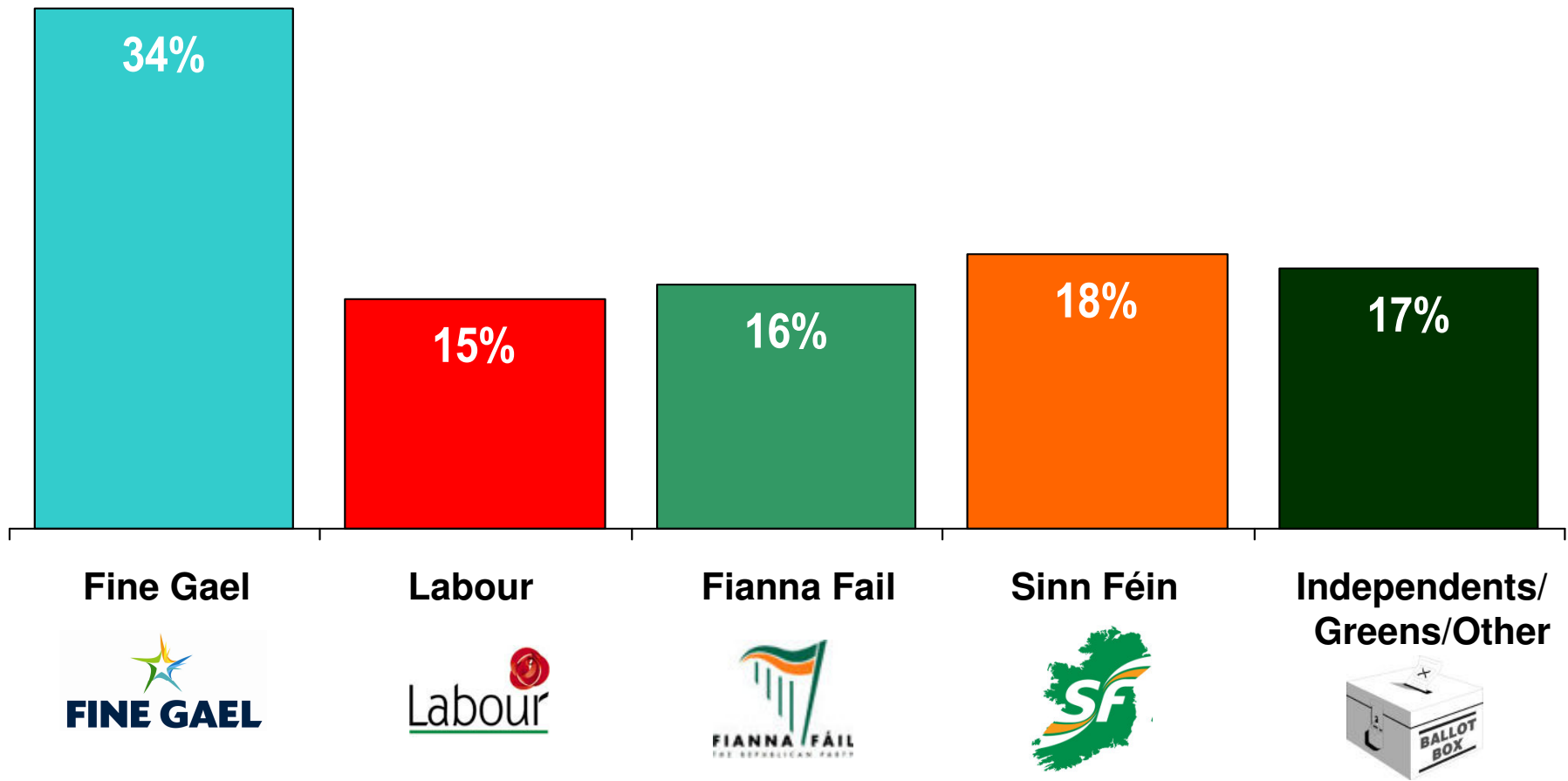
General Election

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+)

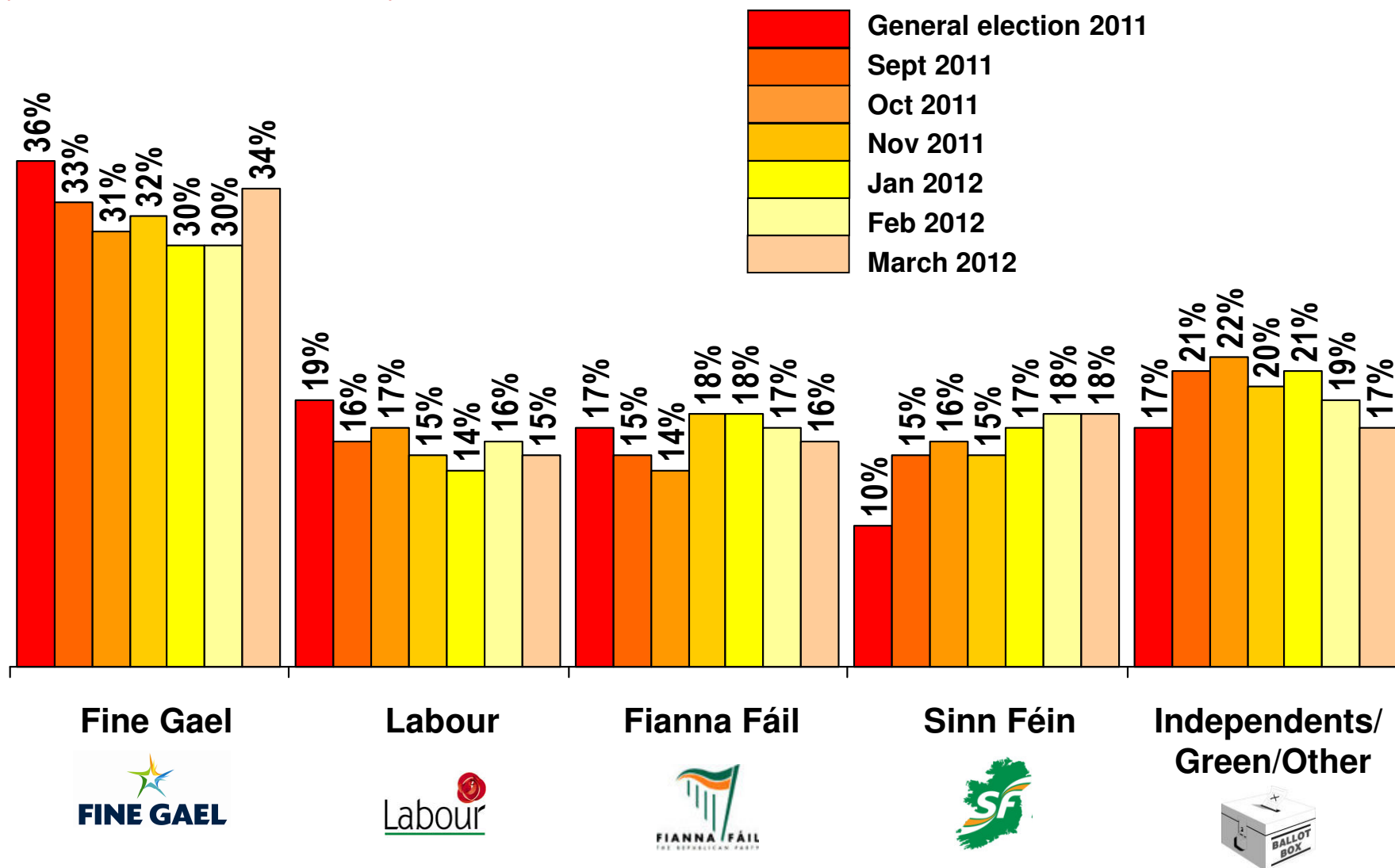


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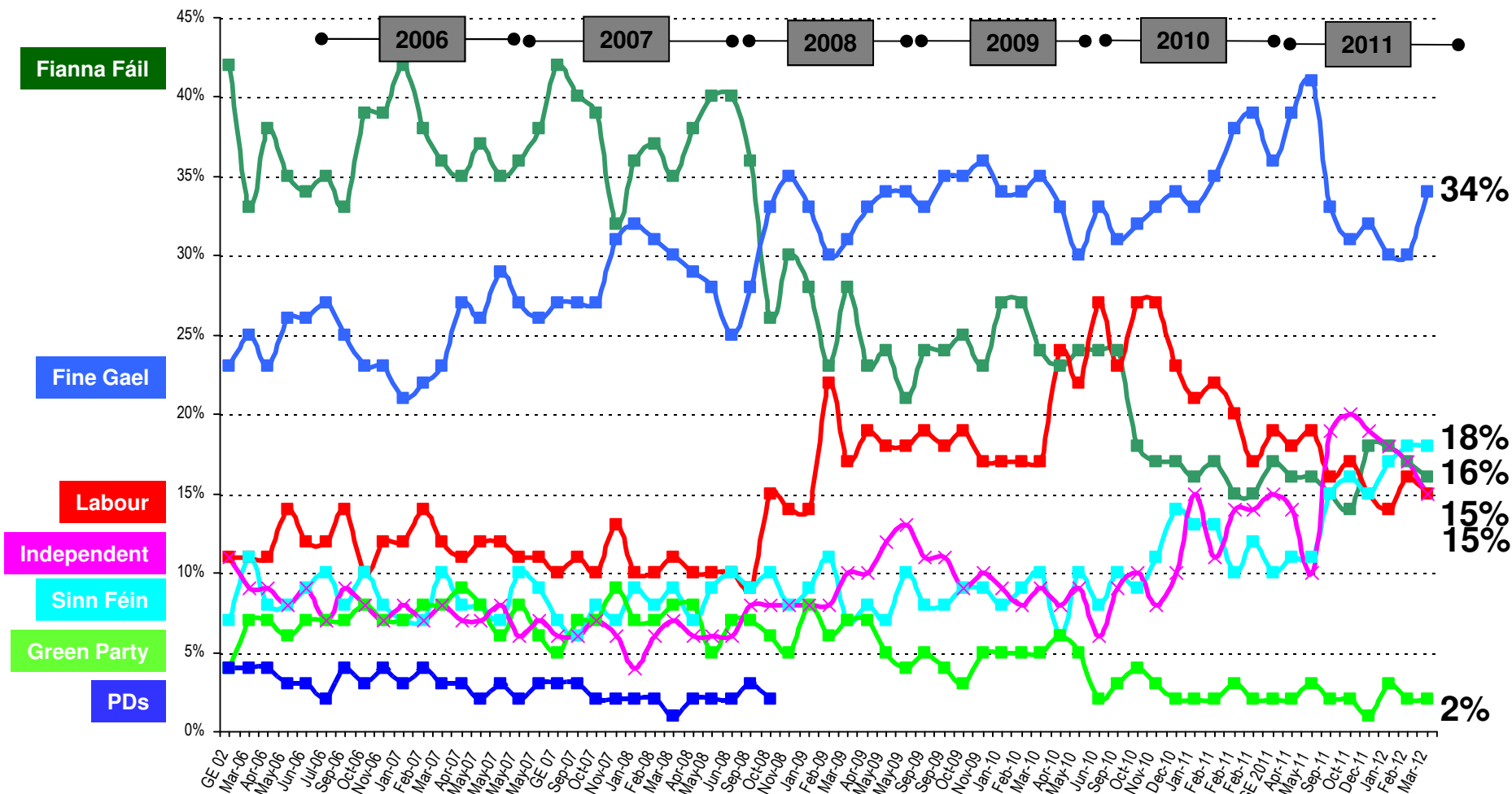


CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures 25th March 2012	Excluding undecided	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	28	34	36
Labour	12	15	19
Fianna Fáil	13	16	17
Sinn Féin	15	18	10
Independents/ Green / Others	14	17	17
Undecided	18		

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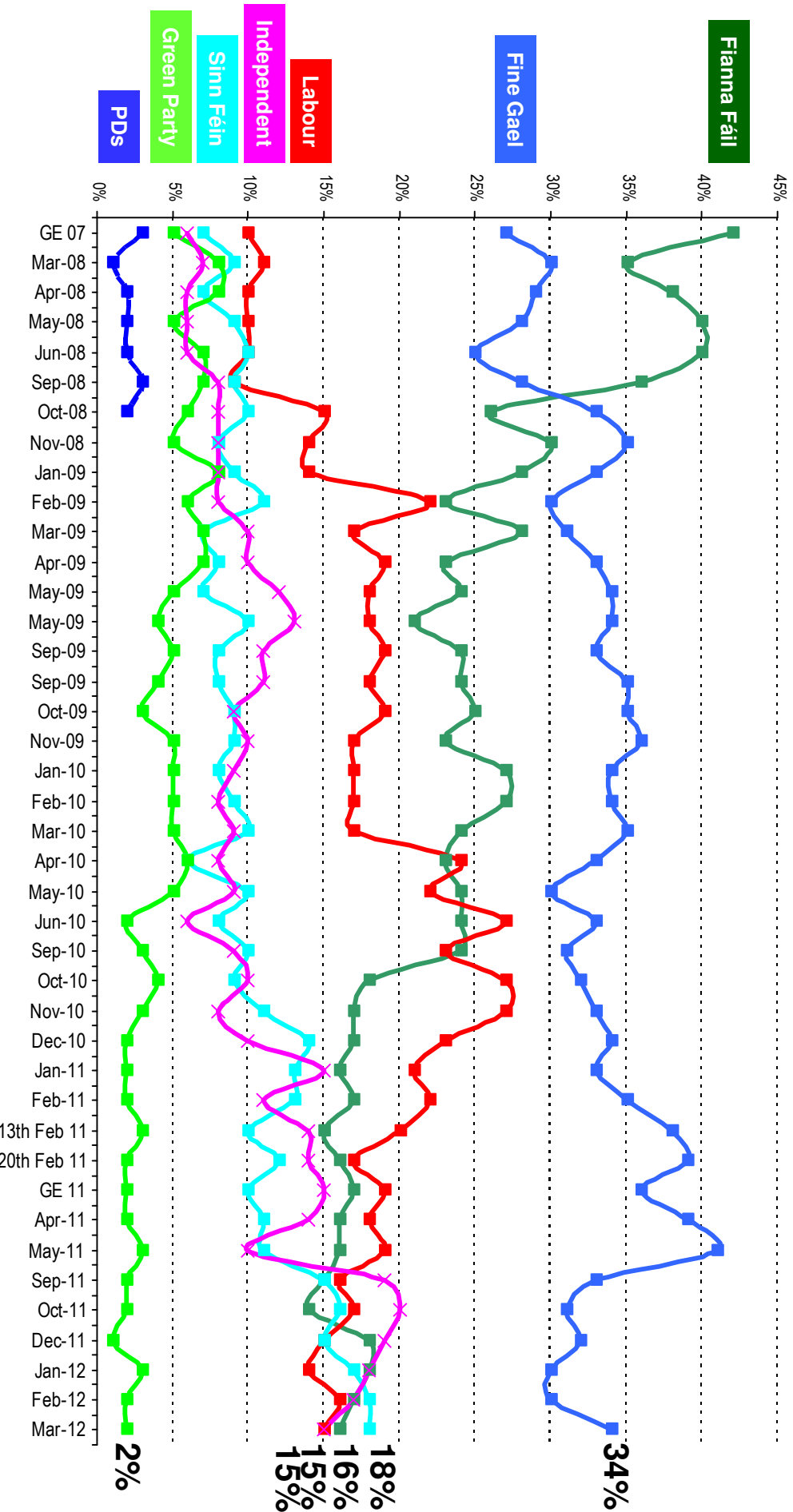
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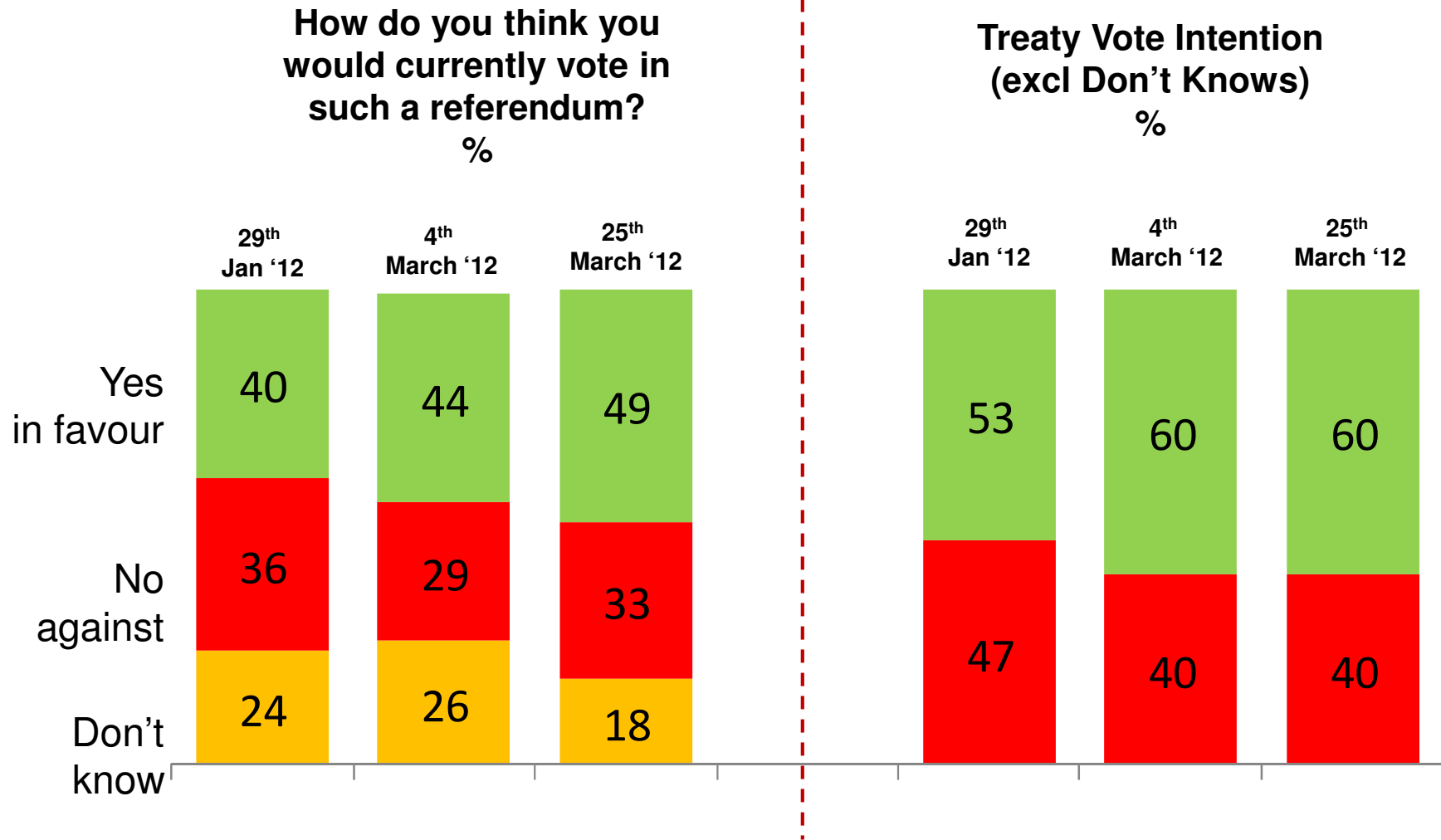
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European Treaty

Likely vote behaviour towards the European Treaty

(Base: All adults 18+)



**March 25th Included Question about likelihood to vote*

How do you think you would currently vote in the EU Treaty referendum – excluding those not likely to vote?

(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)

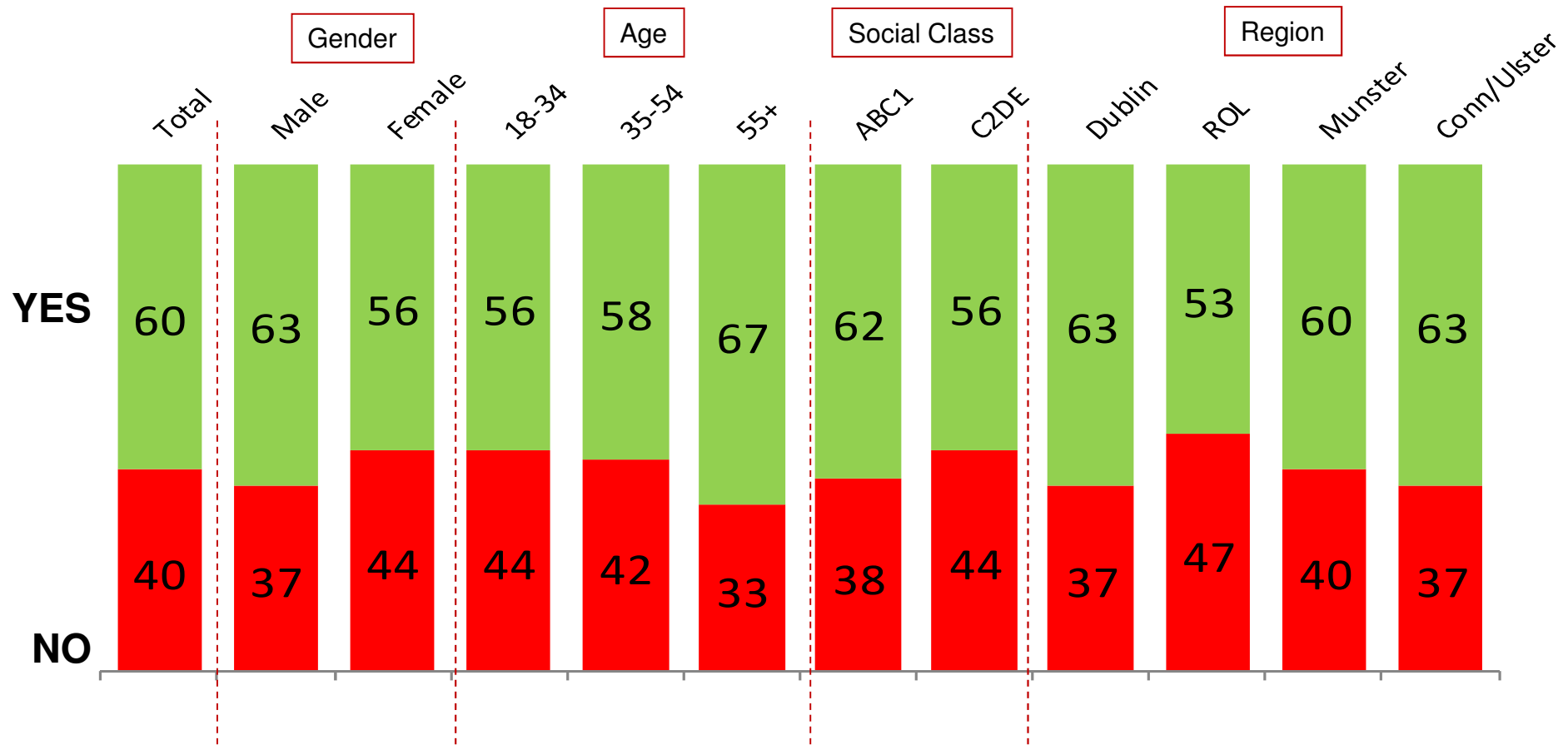


How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?	Total %	Gender		Age			Class		Region			
		Male %	Female %	18-34 %	35-54 %	55+ %	ABC1 %	C2DE %	Dublin %	ROL %	Munster %	Conn/ Ulster %
Yes	49	56	43	46	47	56	51	45	52	43	48	56
No	33	32	34	36	34	29	32	36	30	38	32	33
Don't Know	18	12	23	18	19	15	17	19	18	19	20	11

How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?	Total %	PARTY SUPPORT					
		Fianna Fail	Fine Gael	Labour	Sinn Fein	Ind.	Undecided
BASE SIZE:		(103)	(232)	(98)	(122)	(97)	(138)
Yes	49	62	68	55	26	30	42
No	33	24	17	30	57	50	34
Don't Know	18	14	15	15	17	20	24

How do you think you would currently vote in the EU Treaty referendum – excluding Don't Knows and those not likely to vote?

(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)



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(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)

