



General Election Opinion Poll

13th May 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 1025 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 7th – 9th May 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.



Support Grows for Fiscal Stability Treaty

Against a backdrop of voters in countries across Europe showing signs of a rebellion against austerity, Ireland in contrast appears determined not to rock the boat, with a surge in support for ratifying the Fiscal Stability treaty in today's poll.

This increased support for the Yes camp comes despite the uncertainty that the recent Greek elections and that of Francois Hollande to President of France, have raised about how important the ratification of the treaty by Ireland may be. Whether this is due to the proliferation of Yes vote posters put up in past two weeks, or the queue of senior political figures backing the Yes campaign in the media is unclear, but a combination of these factors appears to have done their job to date, and had a significant impact on voter attitudes towards the upcoming Fiscal Treaty referendum,

The swing towards the Yes vote is clear, with a 6% rise in support in just two weeks, leaving more than half of all likely voters (53%) suggesting they will move to ratify the treaty in just two weeks. At the same time support for the No vote decreases by 4% to 31%. While those that are undecided have also fallen by 2%, leaving just 16% still undecided. This suggests that while some of the gains for the Yes camp have come from undecided voters, making up their mind to vote Yes, still more must be previous No voters switching camps.

Overall it suggests that the possibility of the Treaty being passed in the upcoming referendum appears more likely, as when the remaining undecided are stripped out, we are left with 63% stating they are likely to vote Yes and 37% stating they would vote No.

Further analysis of the swing voters, suggests that this change is heavily due to a move among Fianna Fail and Independent voters. Two weeks ago just under half of all Fianna Fail voters appeared to be protesting against the government, by suggesting they would vote No. But two weeks of relatively high profile campaigning for the Yes camp by the party and in particular by Micheal Martin, appears to have returned supporters to perhaps their more national position of supporting the treaty. At the same time supporters of Independent candidates, and those who currently don't support any party, also appear to have been persuaded to move from the No to the Yes camp.

These changes leave only Sinn Fein supporters strongly in support of the No camp, in line with their parties own position. While support for the party among voters has risen on the back of the media exposure the party is getting during the campaign, this isn't enough to keep the No camp within touching distance overall. With two and a half weeks to go the question is whether the gap is now too big for the No camp to claw back.



Government Party Support Drops.

Despite the apparent resolution of Irish voters to support the Fiscal Stability treaty, this does not appear to have reflected in support for the government parties. Instead the opposite appears to be the case, with Fine Gael in particular losing support, while Sinn Fein and Fianna Fail, both arguably more prominent in the campaign so far, make gains.

Fine Gael support drops by 3% in two weeks, leaving the party securing 29% of the first preference vote. This is closer to where the party had been lying before gains witnessed in the last two months, and shows again just how fragile voters are right now. It is however the lowest level of support the party has seen since Sept 2008, and crucially takes them below the 30% barrier.

Labour support also drops since the last poll. The fall is smaller than for Fine Gael at just 1%, but does mean Labour secure just 13% of the first preference vote, which is also the lowest the party has seen in RED C polls since September 2008, and continues a trend of decline that the party must find a way to reverse.

Sinn Fein continues to gain support at the same rate that labour loses it, securing 21% of the first preference vote in today's poll, a 2% increase in just two weeks. Of course the party is benefiting from heavy media exposure in their No stance to the referendum, as they are the biggest party to support a No vote, which must be given the same airtime as the Yes campaign. In light of this, gains for the party were perhaps expected, but the real test will be whether and for how long they can hold on to that share after the referendum is over. Having said that, this is the first RED C poll which has seen the party break the 20% barrier, and that will be important for the party aiming to become more mainstream. It is worth noting that despite the apparent relationship between Sinn Fein's rise and Labour's fall, they are gaining as much from Fine Gael as from Labour, and ultimately the gains are from disaffected 2007 Fianna Fail voters, who initially moved to both Fine Gael and Labour at the 2011 election, and are now looking for a new home.

Fianna Fail also make gains in today's poll, increasing their share by 2%, to leave them securing 19% overall. The party has arguably been more active in the referendum campaign than the government parties, and this may have helped them. While the poll was being conducted they also received a considerable level of media attention through Eamonn O'Cuiv's possible resignation and eventual retention within the party. By whatever means this increase has come about, the party will be delighted to see that they still have potential to increase their support, which is at levels not seen since news of the IMF bailout first emerged when they were in power.

It appears then that active campaigning for the referendum, whether it be for the Yes or No camp, is good for your political health, and as a result we may see more active campaigning from all the parties over the final two and a half weeks.

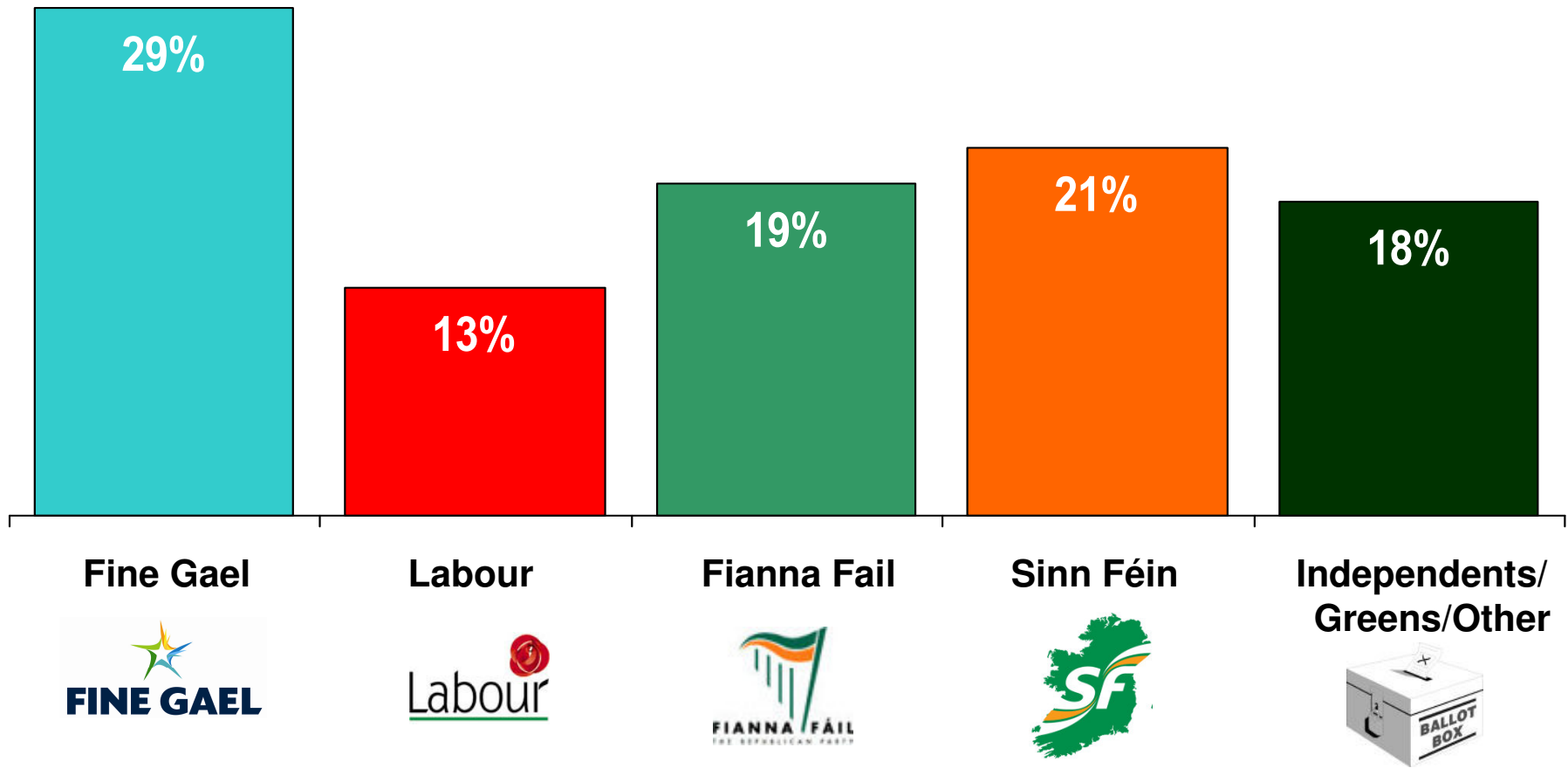
General Election

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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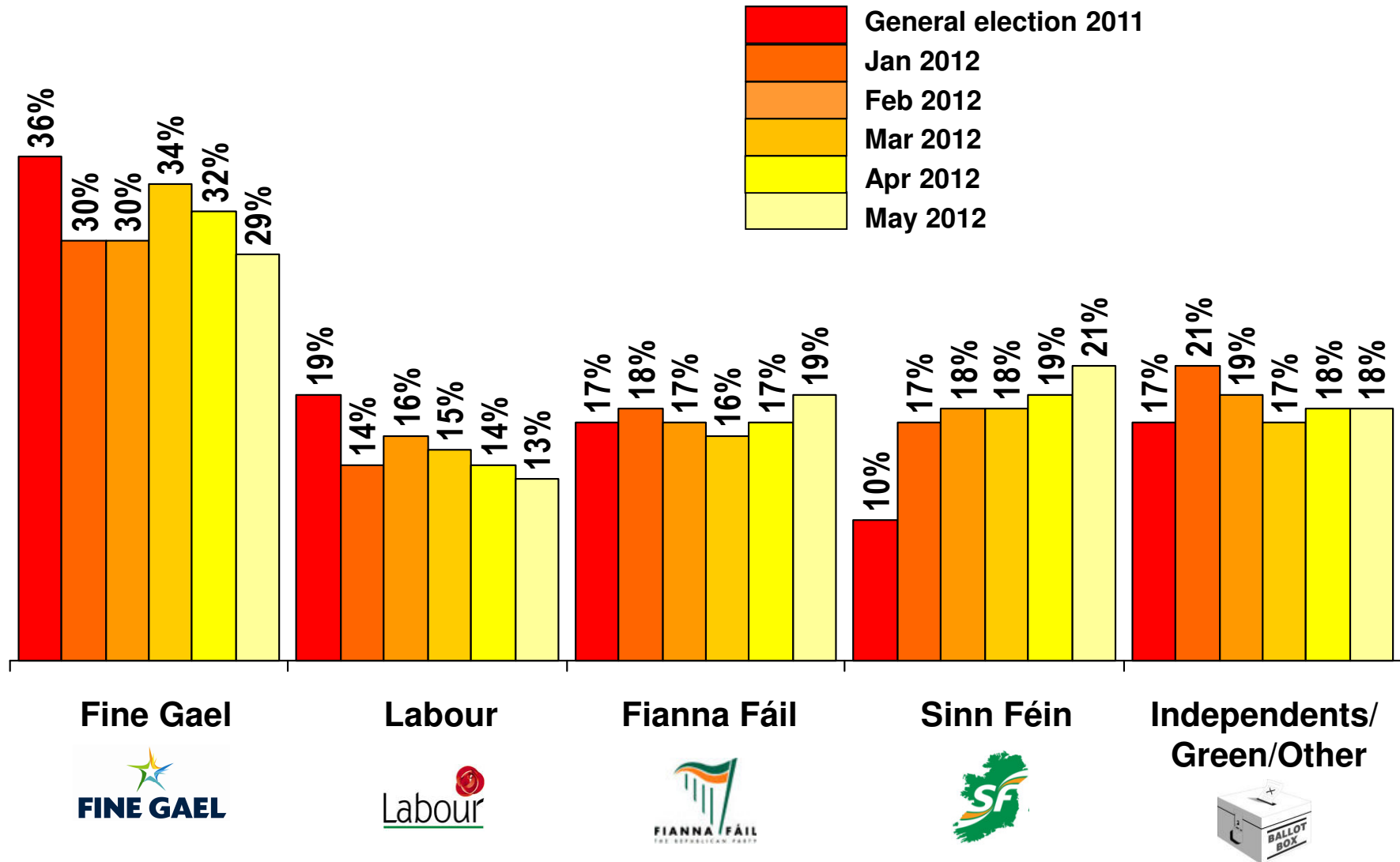


RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION CLARITY

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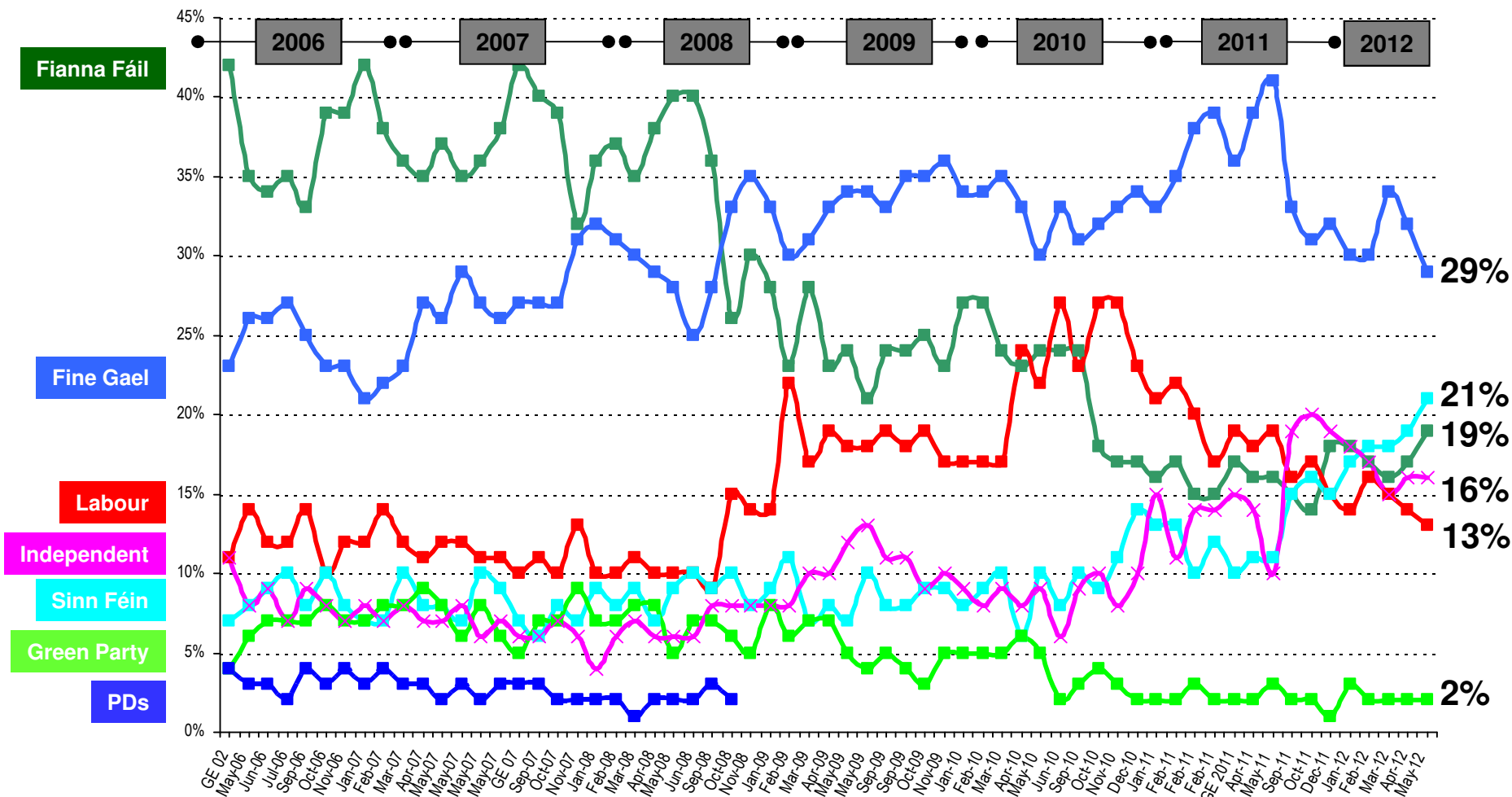


CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE			
	Core figures 13th May 2012	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in 2011	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	24	29	36
Labour	11	13	19
Fianna Fáil	15	19	17
Sinn Féin	19	21	10
Independent candidates	11	14	13
Green Party	1	2	2
Socialist Party	1	1	1
Other Party	1	1	1
Undecided	17		

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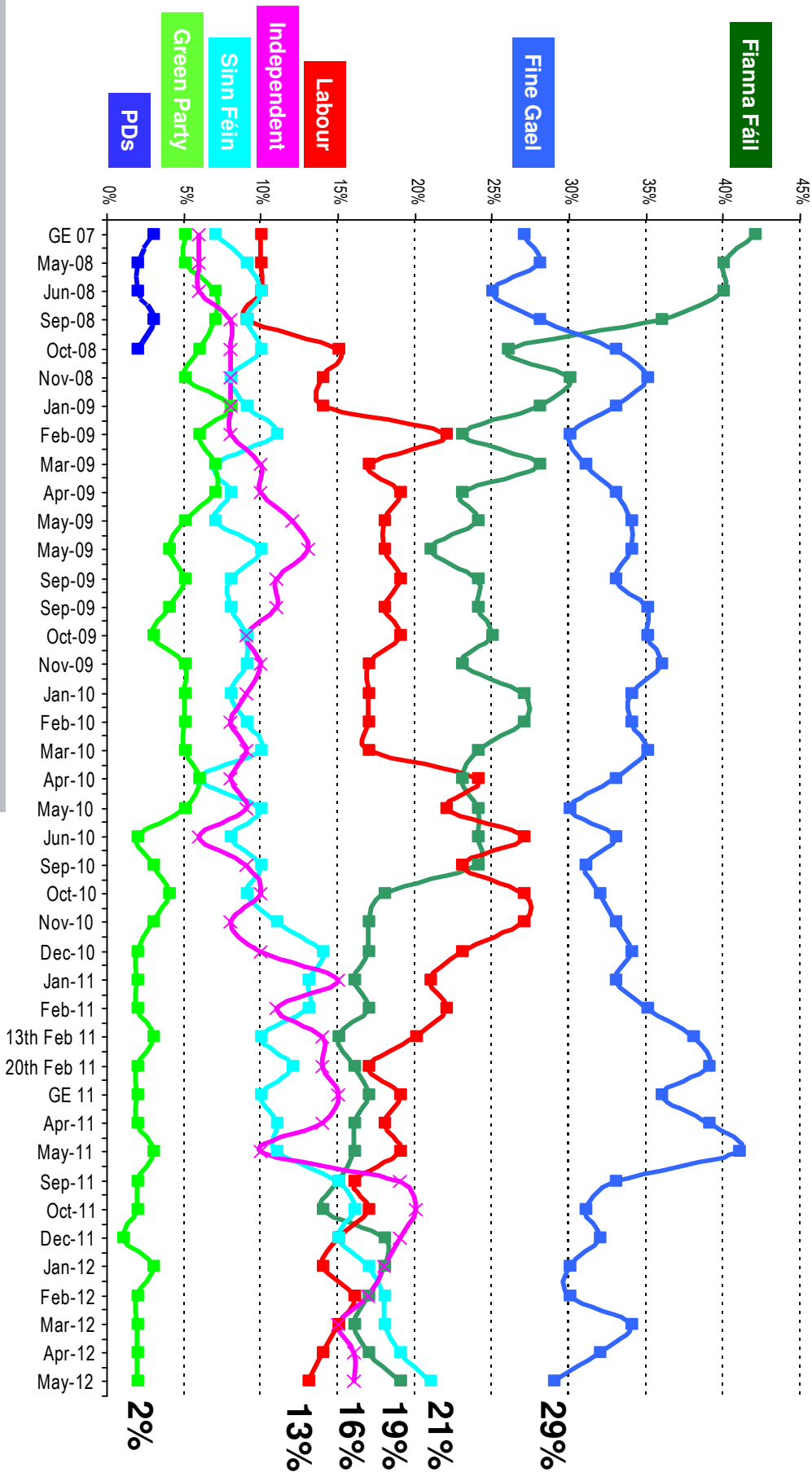
(Base: All adults 18+)

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European Treaty

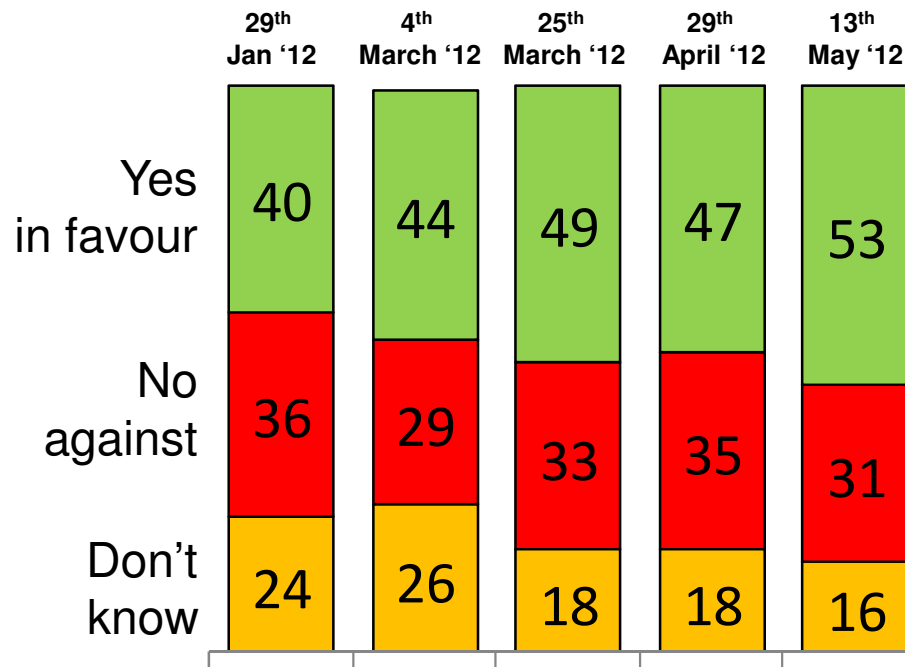
Likely vote behaviour towards the European Treaty

(Base: All adults 18+/ all adults 18+ likely to vote)



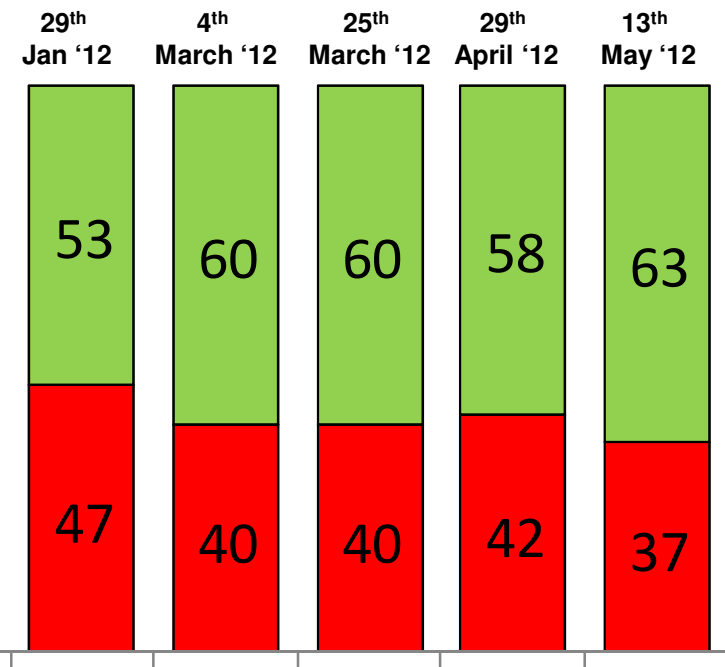
How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?

%



Treaty Vote Intention (excl Don't Knows)

%



Q. European Union country leaders have agreed on a new European Fiscal Stability Treaty in 2012, that would entail greater oversight by the EU over member states budgets. In the upcoming referendum, you will have the option to vote YES in favour of Ireland ratifying the treaty, or NO against Ireland ratifying the treat. How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?

***March 25th Onwards Includes 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	53	55	52	44	53	63	55	48	51	52	56	55
No	31	36	27	36	32	25	30	35	32	36	29	26
Don't Know	16	9	21	20	15	12	15	17	17	12	15	19

How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?	Total %	PARTY SUPPORT					
		Fianna Fail	Fine Gael	Labour	Sinn Fein	Ind.	Undecided
Yes	53	62	79	50	27	39	52
No	31	26	13	26	62	39	23
Don't Know	16	12	8	24	11	22	25

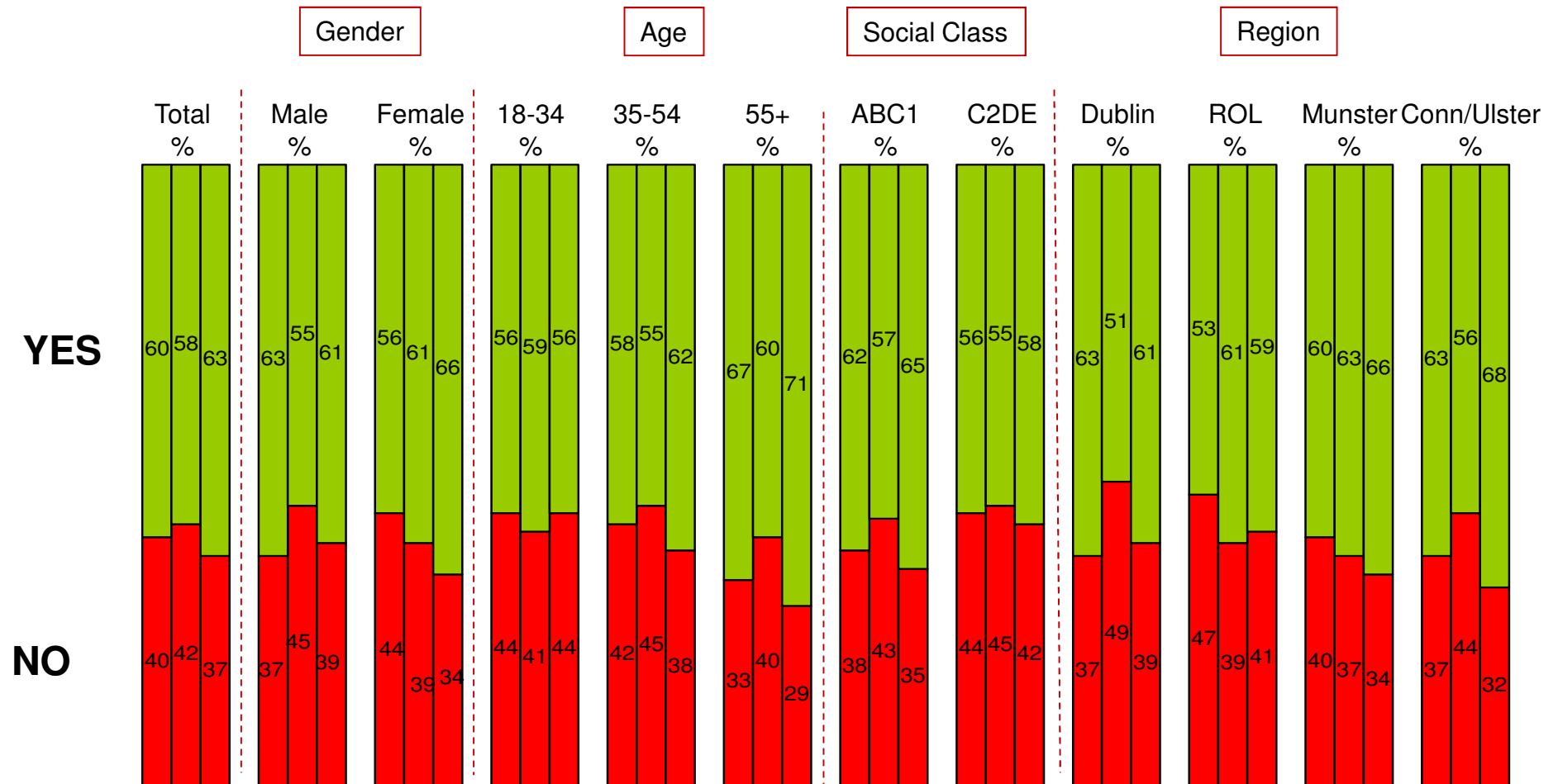
How do you think you would currently vote in the EU Treaty referendum – excluding Don't Knows and those not likely to vote?

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



Apr '12

Mar '12 May '12



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)



Apr '12

Mar '12 May '12

Current Party Support

