



Voting Intention Tracking Poll

20th Feb 2011

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



Methodology and Weighting

RED C interviewed a random sample of 1015 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 15th & 17th 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 – 20th Feb - Opinion Poll

Fine Gael wins the campaign...so far

Less than week from the election, and there is no question that Fine Gael are the party with the famous “momentum” behind them. During the campaign the party have seen a consistent upward trend in the polls that has taken them from securing 33% share at the start of the campaign, to 39% share in this poll.

Whether these trends will continue strongly enough to allow for a majority government isn't completely clear. However, there is some interesting data to help us try to understand the possibilities of Fine Gael achieving this or greater vote share on Election Day.

The first factor we need to take into account is the turnaround in voter's opinions of Enda Kenny, from something of a liability to perhaps more of an asset. Kenny started the campaign at the end of January, trailing both Martin and Gilmore, with just 19% of the electorate believing he would make the best next Taoiseach. In just three weeks of campaigning he has completely reversed this, and while not all of those that plan to vote Fine Gael believe he would make the best Taoiseach, he does have the support of 31%. This now places him ahead of both Martin and Gilmore, who has fallen back as quickly as Kenny has risen in the eyes of voters. This suggests Kenny doesn't appear to be quite the barrier he once was to undecided voters.

The second factor we can look at is the strengthening loyalty of those that are supporting the party. While other parties have remained stagnant, Fine Gael has improved its share of loyal voters as the campaign progressed. At the start of the campaign 19% said they were 100% loyal to Fine Gael, three weeks later and 25% now say they will definitely vote for the party. At the same time, as people make up their minds, the proportion of people that say they definitely won't vote for different parties increases for most. In particular, Labour have seen a hardening trend against them, with 35% of voters now saying they definitely won't vote for the party, compared to just 29% three weeks ago. But in contrast to all the other parties, Fine Gael now have less people that say they definitely won't vote for them.

The final pointer to a possible Fine Gael majority is how well they can turn first preference share into seats. This is all about the transfers, which are likely to be very different in this election, than in any recent one. It is apparent from the limited number of constituency polls RED C have conducted, that Fine Gael do appear to be quite transfer friendly compared to the other parties. It is also clear from today's survey that both Fine Gael and Independent candidates are growing their share of suggested second preference votes. Taking both of these factors into account, it is possible that Fine Gael may not need 42% or more to get an overall majority, as is the accepted wisdom. In fact could 39% possibly be enough?

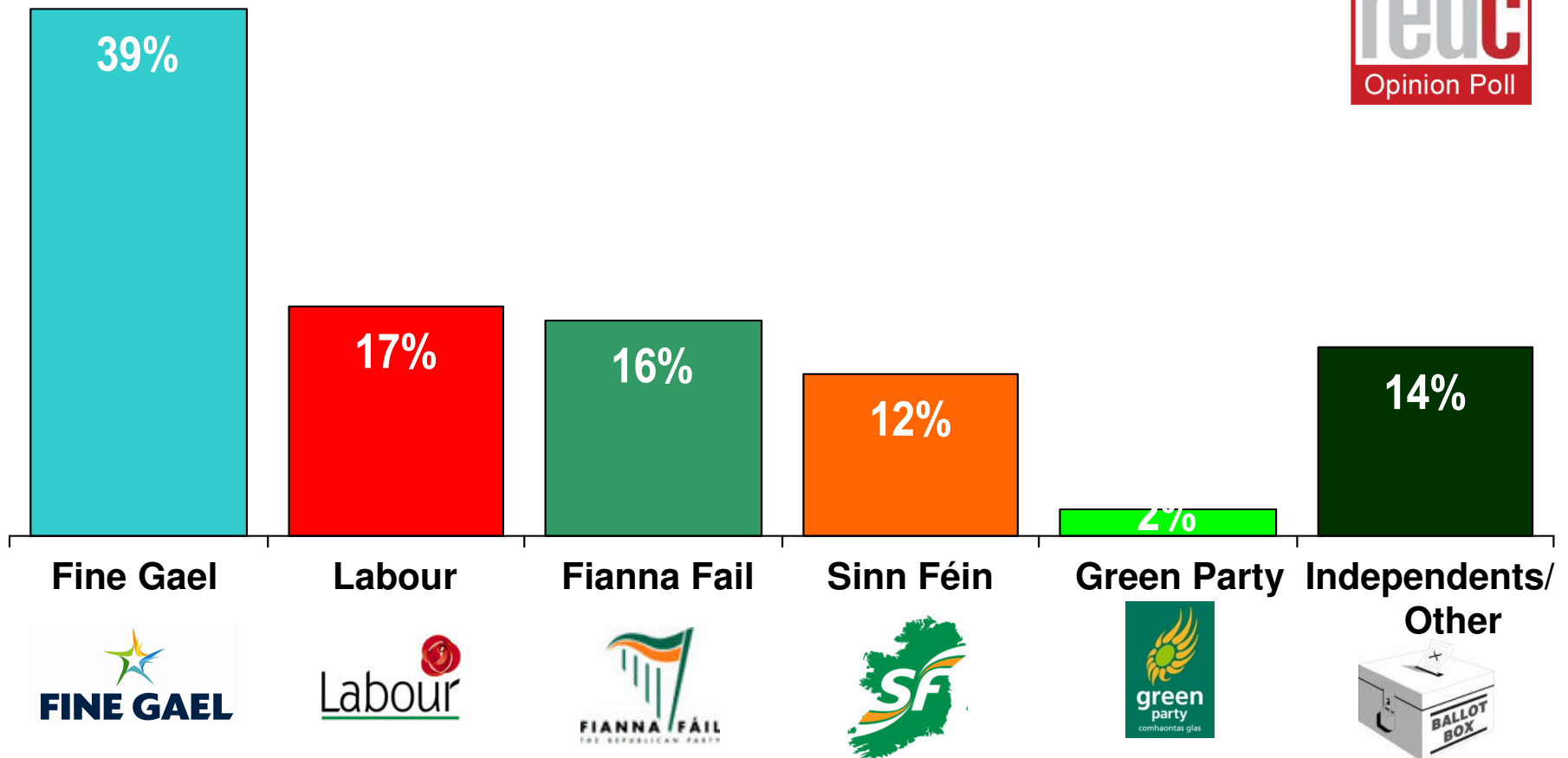
Labour may well still have something to say about that though. Don't forget that there are still 16% undecided in this poll, and a further 9% who have told us which party they will vote for but are not definite in that choice. That means there are still plenty of voters who are unsure about their choices, with only a week to go. While the trend for Labour has been downward over the campaign, they still have the highest potential vote after Fine Gael. This poll was also taken largely before Labour went on their latest offensive against Fine Gael; highlighting what they call are "hidden costs" in the Fine Gael proposals, through national adverts. A very strong final week focusing on the issues, and not perhaps on a declining impact of Eamon Gilmore, may well see them regain some of the lost share. Labour are also still quite vote friendly on transfers, and as such could themselves do better in seats than their first preference suggests, ensuring a coalition remains on the cards.

Serious movement in share is unlikely for any of the other parties, who do not have very high levels of potential voters over and above the share they secure in the poll. As such, this election remains all about Fine Gael and Labour in the final week. Can Fine Gael keep the momentum going, or will Labour do enough to give themselves a chance to form part 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+)

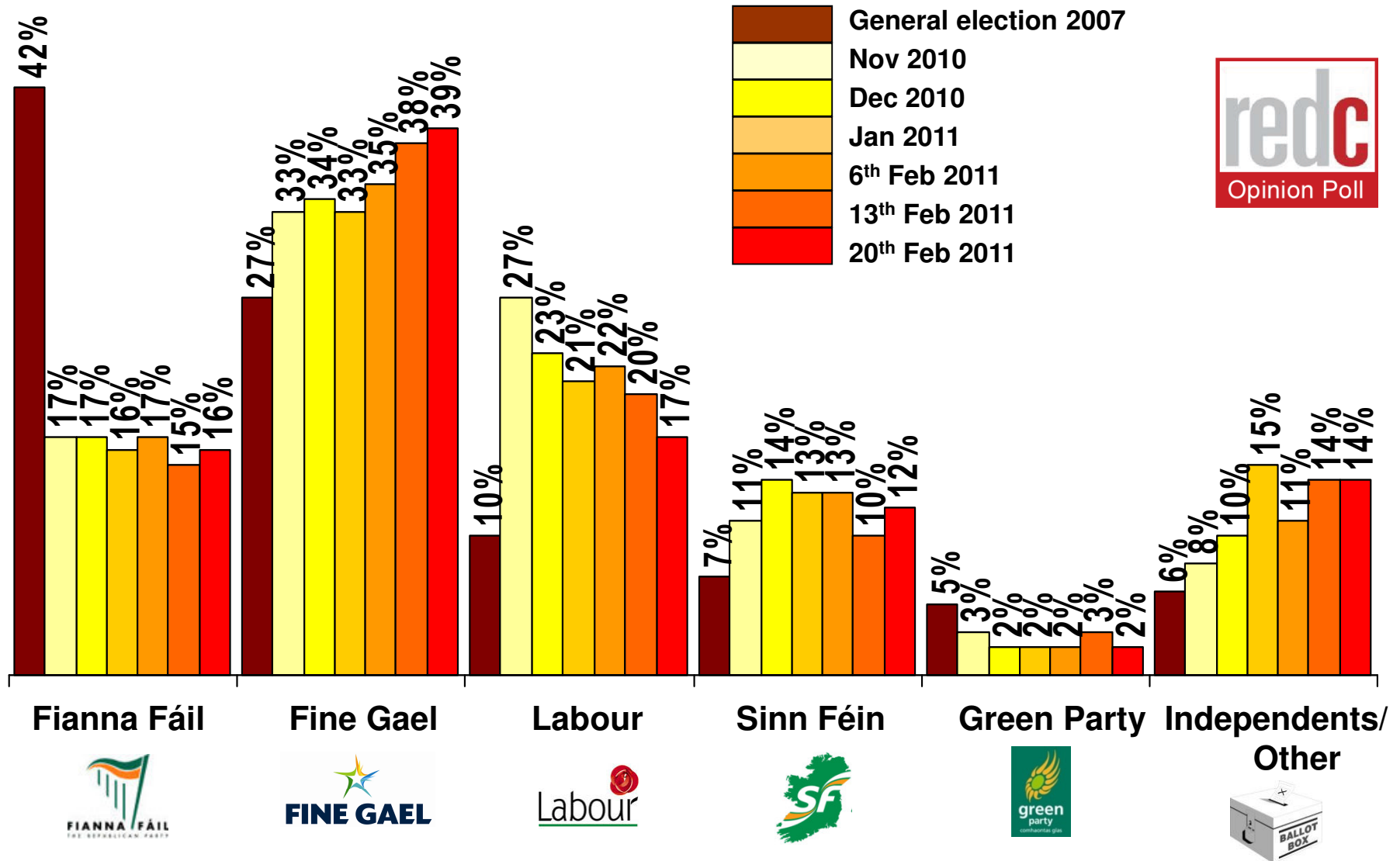
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CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures 20th Feb 2011	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	33	39	27
Labour	14	17	10
Fianna Fáil	13	16	42
Sinn Féin	10	12	7
Green Party	2	2	5
Independents/ Others	12	14	6
Undecided	16		

Spiral of Silence Allocation of Undecided Voters.

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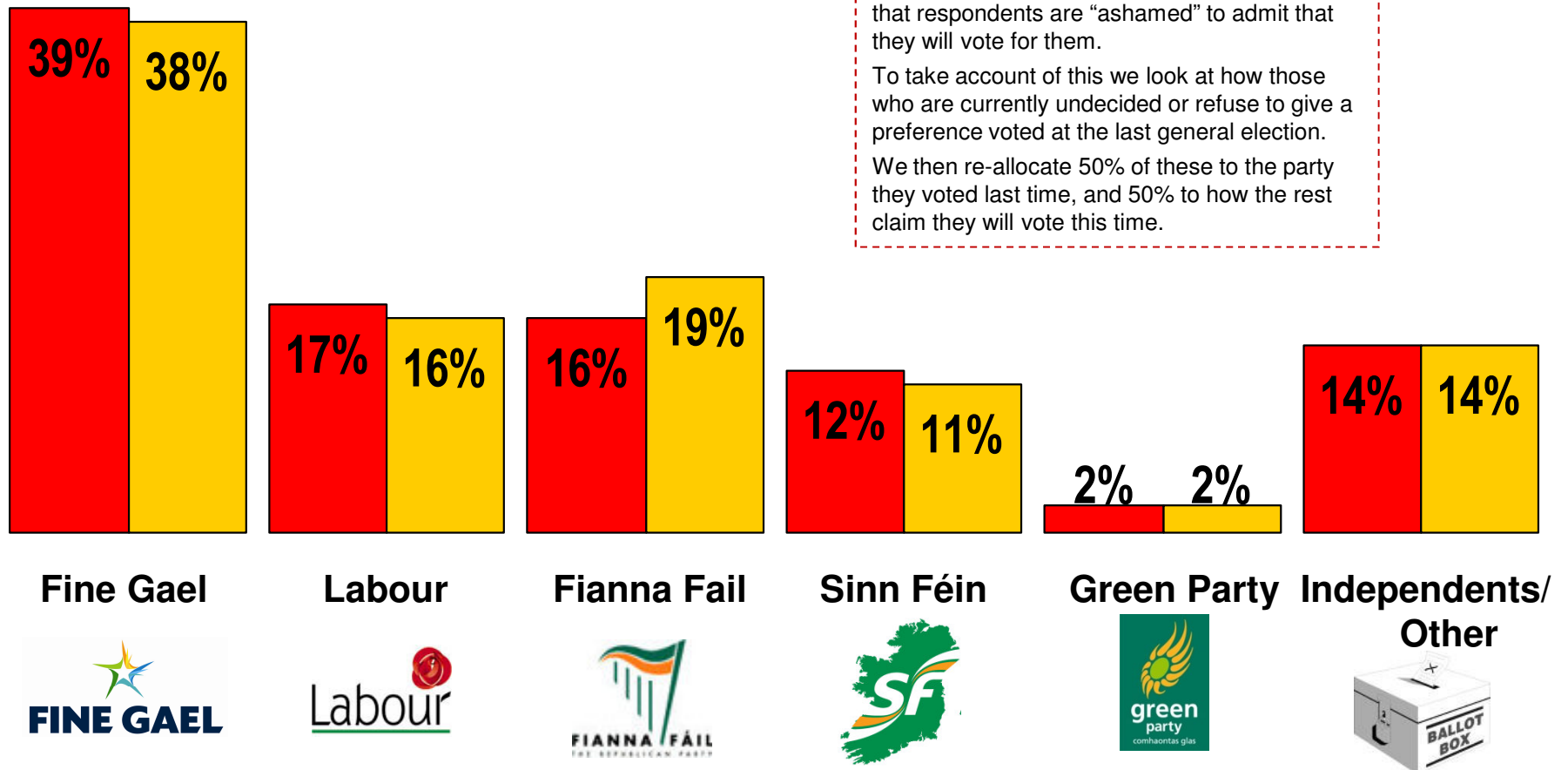
■ Normal D/K allocation ■ Past Vote weighted D/K Allocation

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.

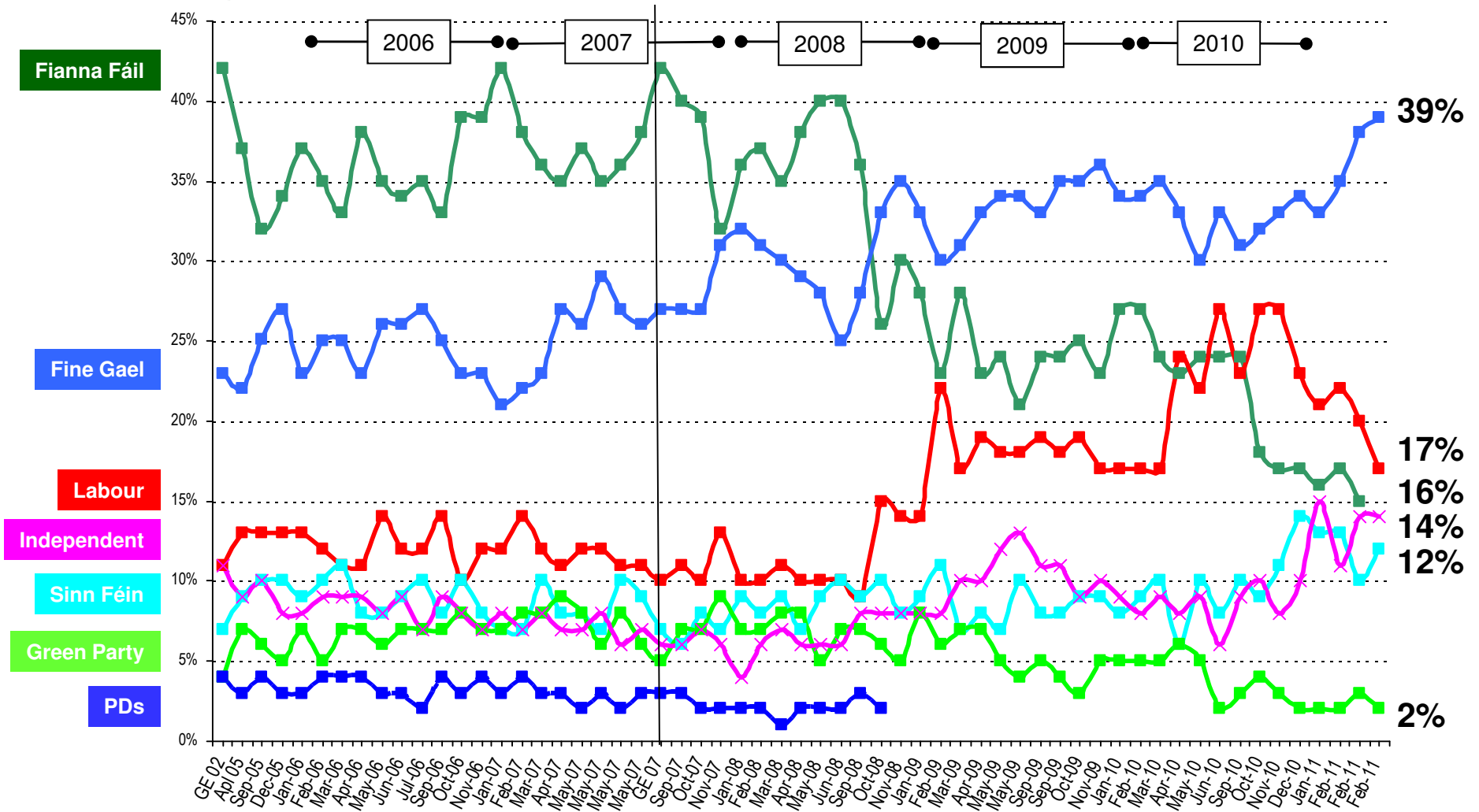


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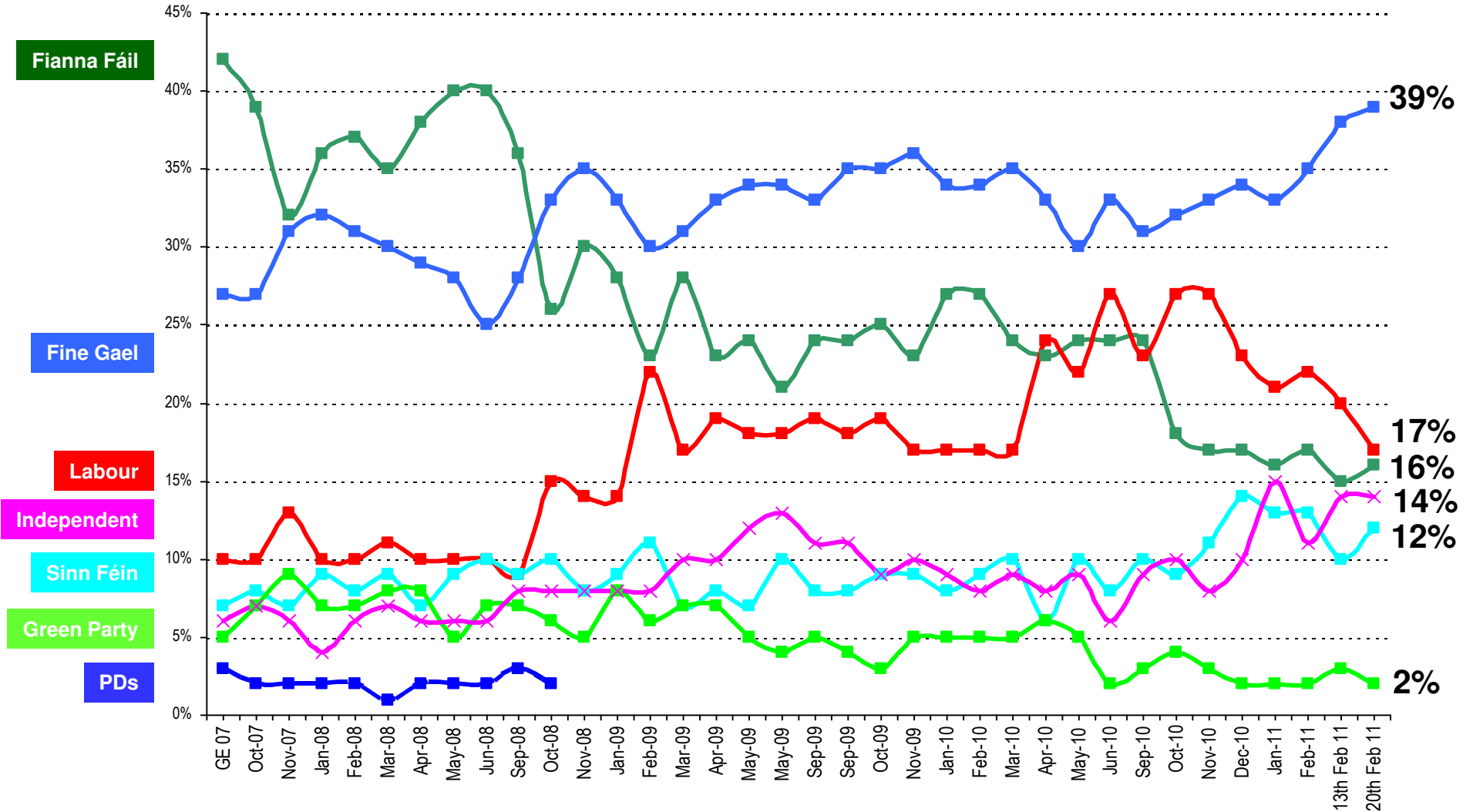


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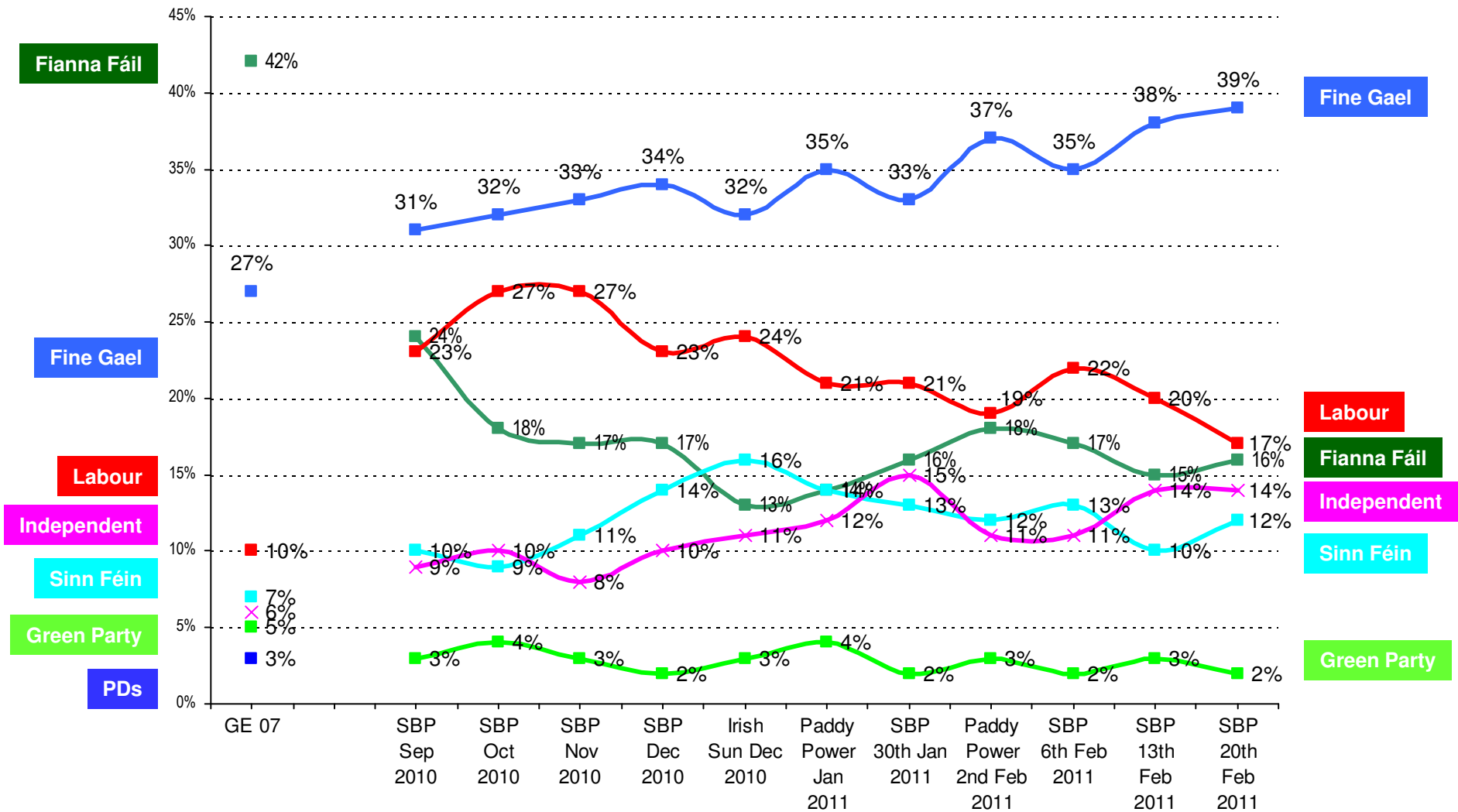
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General Election 2011

Run Up and Campaign 1st Preference Poll Trends

(Base: All adults 18+)

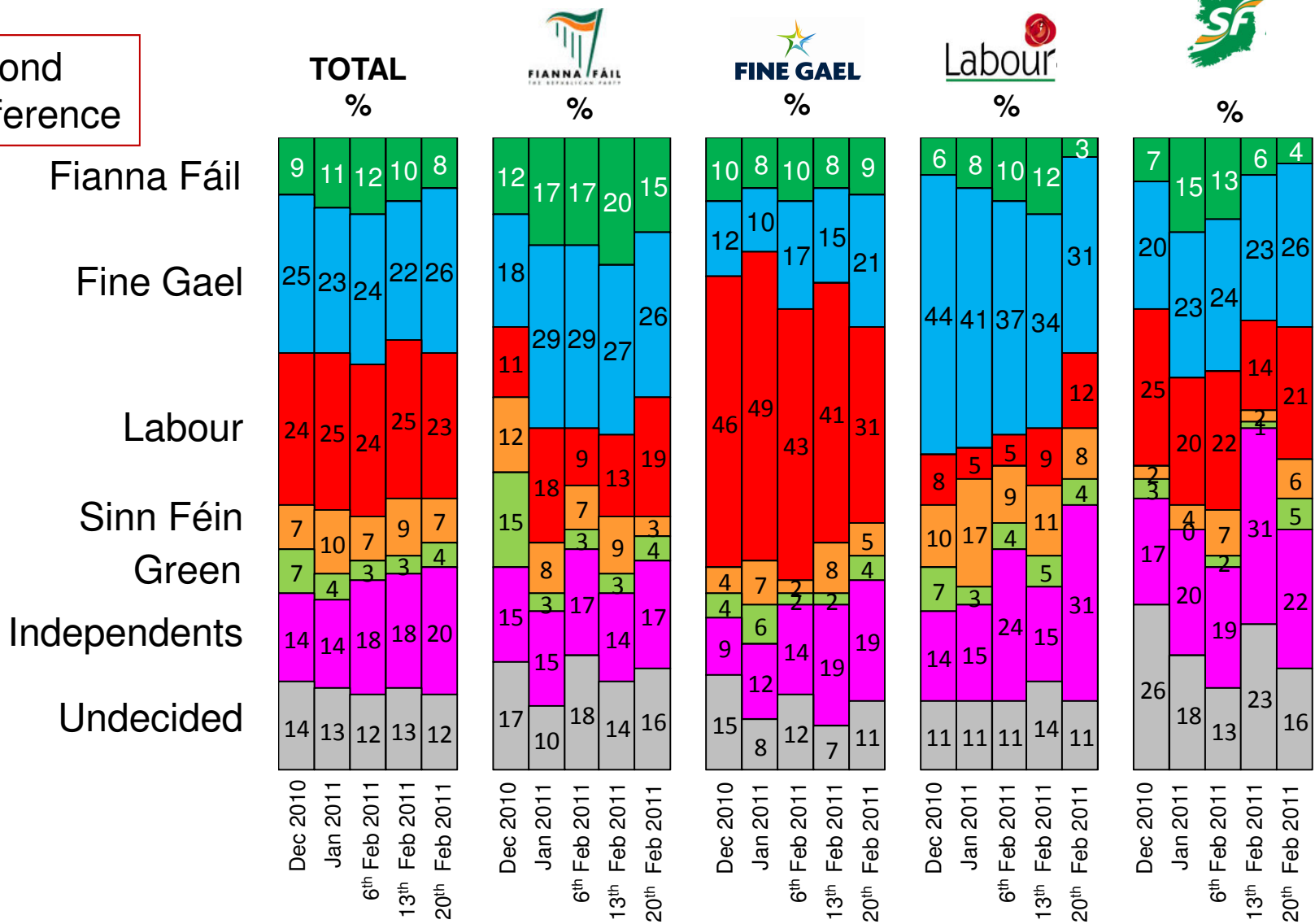


Second Preference among First preference voters



First Preference

Second Preference



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

(Base: All Adults Likely to Vote – 913)



%



%



%



%

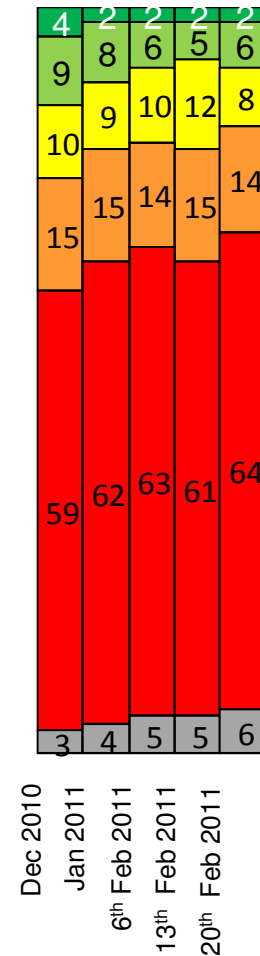
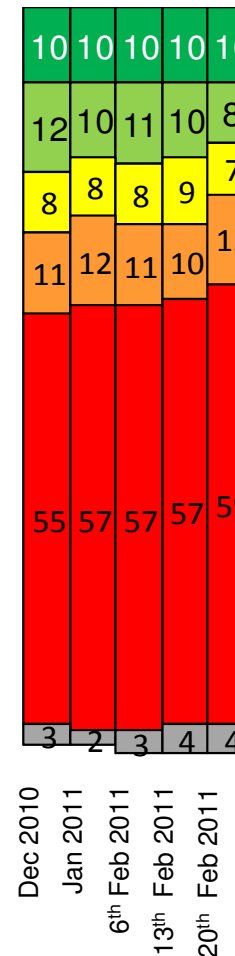
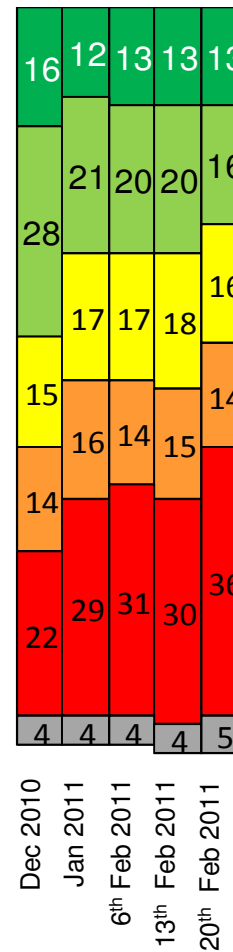
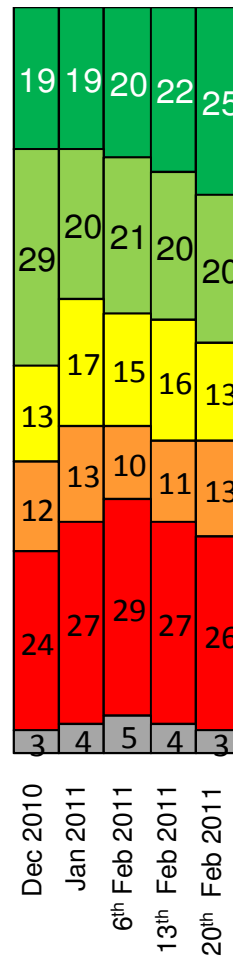
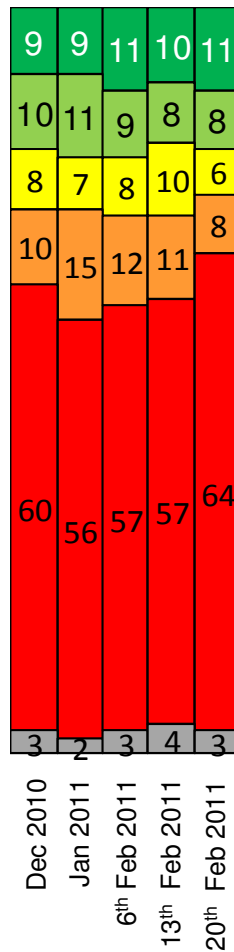


%

Definitely Will
Likely To
Might Do
Probably Won't

Definitely Won't

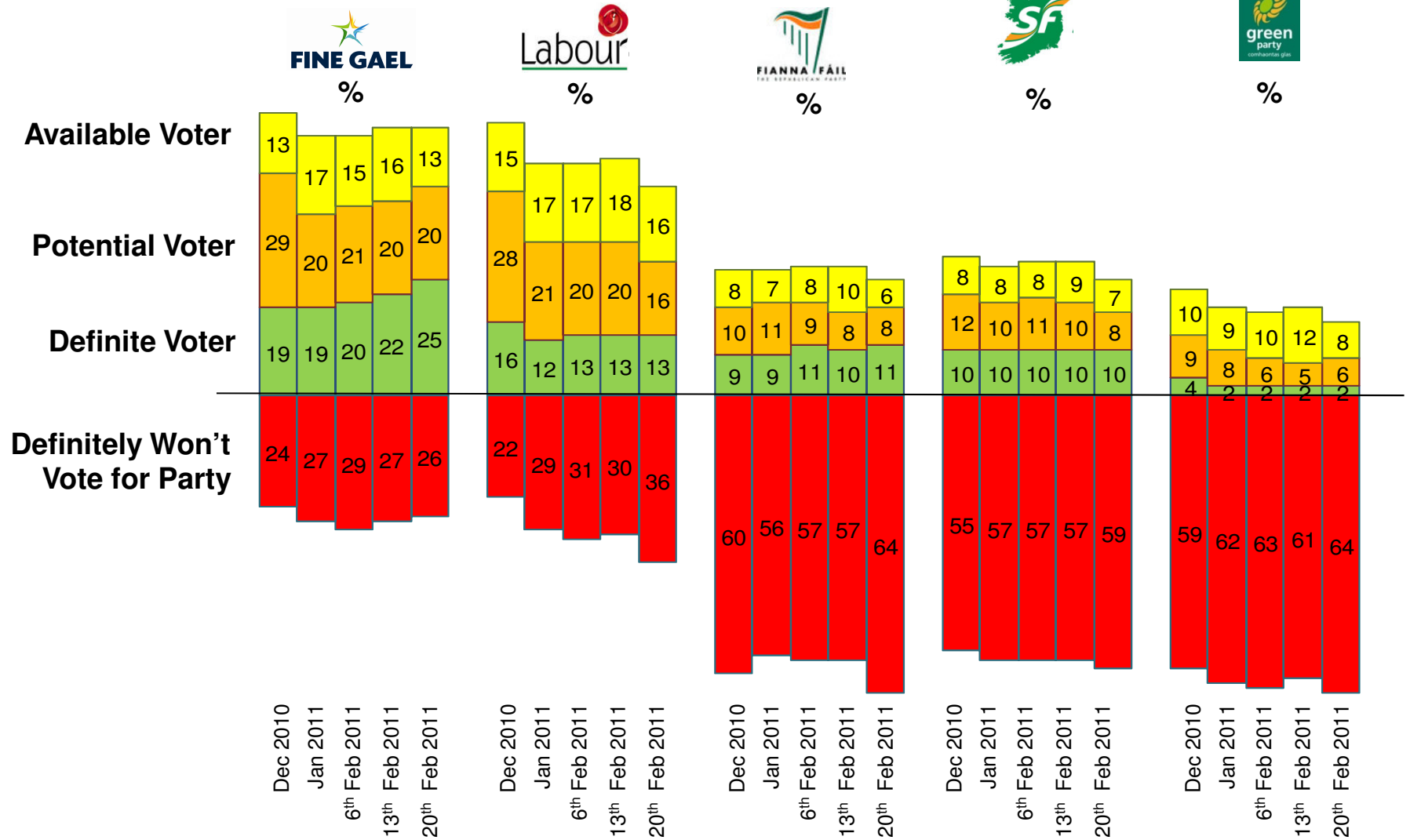
D/K Refused



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

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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)

