



General Election Opinion Poll

23rd Sept 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 1,003 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 17th and 19th September 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.

Sinn Fein gain as Budget Issues put Labour under pressure

Just three months ago, when the Dail was about to break up for the summer, we were talking about a post referendum hangover for Sinn Fein, with support for the party falling back as coverage for the party dies down following the election. Roll on three months and Sinn Fein is the only party to see any significant change in support over the intervening months, with Fine Gael and Fianna Fail registering stable support, and Labour and other parties down very slightly.

Sinn Fein secure 18% share of the vote, up 2% since June, and while not back to the levels evident during the referendum, this is a positive gain for the party after a downward trend in recent polls. The support for the party is focused among young men, and this is where the biggest gains have come in the past few months, while support among younger women has fallen back.

Labour sees support drop back by 1%, to leave the party languishing at 14% support. The party definitely appears to be coming under pressure in the run up to the budget, the start of which seems to be earlier every year. While the budget is still two and half months away discussion about what may or may not be in it have very much been in the news over recent weeks. The impact of this appears to have hit Labour more so than Fine Gael at this early stage, with evidence that voters who may usually be inclined to vote for Labour, somewhat more likely to feel that the coalition has gone back on its election promises on tax, and also worried that the coalition is not able to manage the economy.

We asked voters whether they feel that the government coalition had gone back on their election promises on tax. Almost three quarters (71%) believe they have done, an increase of 5% in the past year. Of course it is no surprise to see that the large majority of those that would vote for opposition parties feel this to be the case. More of a concern for the coalition is if any of those that currently or have voted for the government parties, believe they have broken election promises on tax. Over half (57%) of all Fine Gael voters agree that the coalition has gone back on its promises, which is not a great result, but is at least significantly lower than among all voters. For Labour the news is not so good, as three quarters of all current Labour voters suggesting they feel the coalition has gone back on its promises. A potentially dangerous position to be in given the worst of the budget has probably not yet been revealed.

Further evidence that Labour is under pressure because of the budget is seen in the question about economic competence of the coalition government. Over a third of all voters (38%) trust the government parties to manage the public finances, which isn't a ringing endorsement, but this is in line with where they were last year. Of course this doesn't really worry the parties, as long as their own supporters generally believe that they are capable.

Sinn Fein gain as Budget Issues put Labour under pressure

This is where the problems arise for Labour. Only just over 2 in 5 (44%) of those people who voted for Labour at the last election, and only just over half (52%) of those that claim they will still vote for the party, trust the coalition to manage the public finances.

Fine Gael does not appear at this stage to struggle with Budget coverage as much as Labour, perhaps because as the larger party in the coalition they have more chance to hold to their ideals. Support for the party remains at 32% of the first preference vote, which is positive given the gains in support over the previous two months. Fine Gael party supporters are more likely to trust the coalition to manage the public finances, although there are still 34% of supporters who don't, which they certainly need to be wary of.

Supporters are also less likely to feel the coalition has gone back on its election promises. However supporters are very much looking for a move on the Croke Park agreement. Over two thirds (66%) of all voters would like to see the Croke park agreement reviewed and public sectors costs reduced, but this rise to 75% of Fine Gael voters. This issue will again put pressure on the coalition, but in these negotiations, Labour should bear in mind that a significant proportion of their own supporters, also want to see the Croke Park agreement revisited. In fact, 3 in 5 Labour voters (60%) suggest they would also like to see the Croke Park agreement reviewed.

This does however need to be tempered with the fact that voters are split on the issue of cuts to public services vs. tax increases. Just over half (52%) would prefer to see more cuts in services, with just under half preferring increased taxes. In this respect supporters of the coalition partners are more at odds than others. Labour supporters are on balance more supportive of increased taxes rather than cuts in public services, with just 39% supporting cuts, and the only party with supporters taking this majority view. Fine Gael supporters on the other hand are on balance keener to see cuts in public services rather than increased taxes.

As you might expect Fianna Fail supporters are much more similar in attitude on budget issues to Fine Gael supporters, than Labour supporters; apart from the fact that they are most likely to feel that the government has gone back on its election promises. At this stage the negative reaction of past Fianna Fail voters to broken promises doesn't convert into further gains for the party, but they do secure a stable 18% of the first preference vote, and may see this as a springboard for vote gains in the future given that there is still a substantial number of past Fianna Fail voters in the current Fine Gael camp.

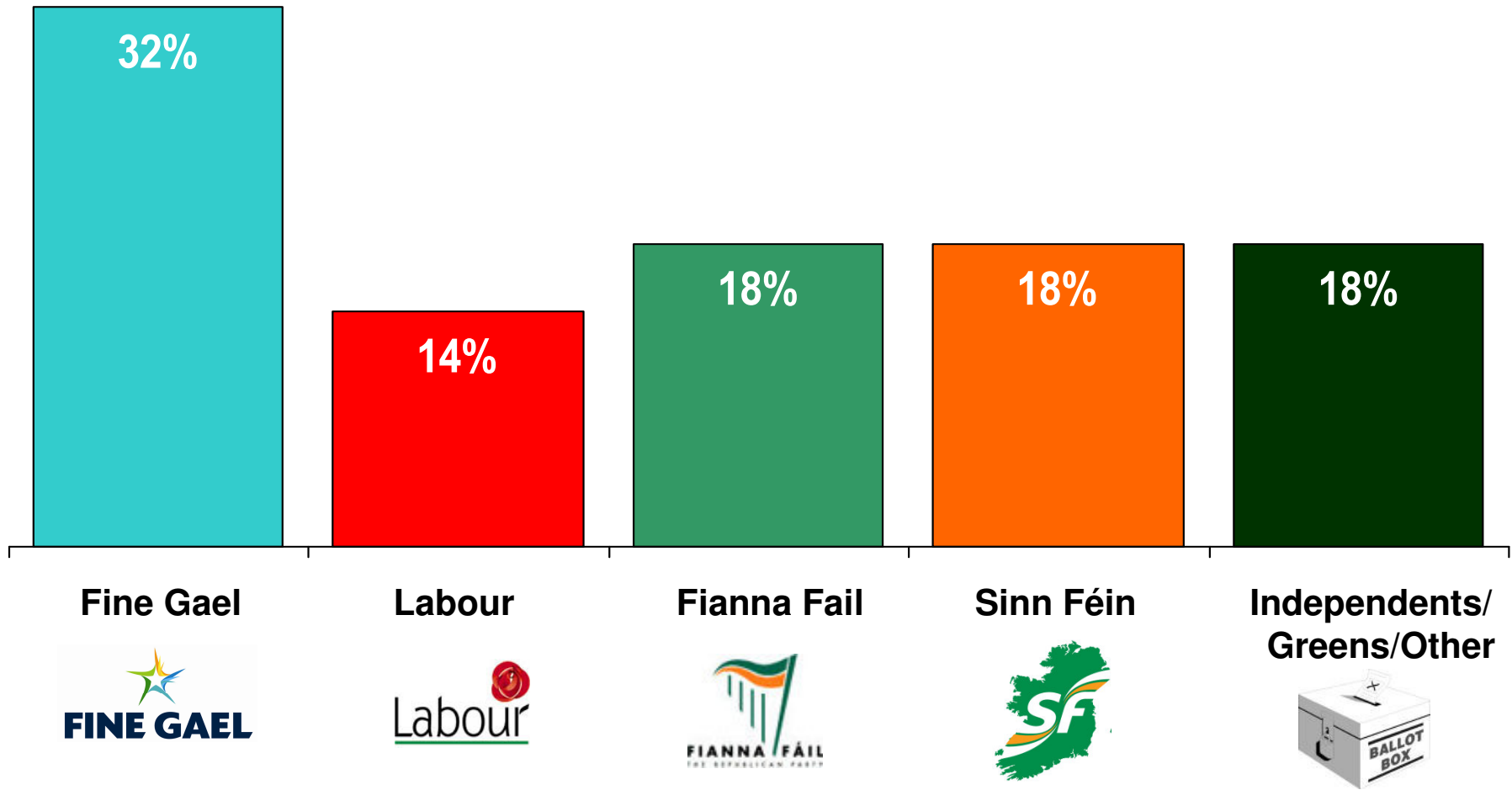
General Election

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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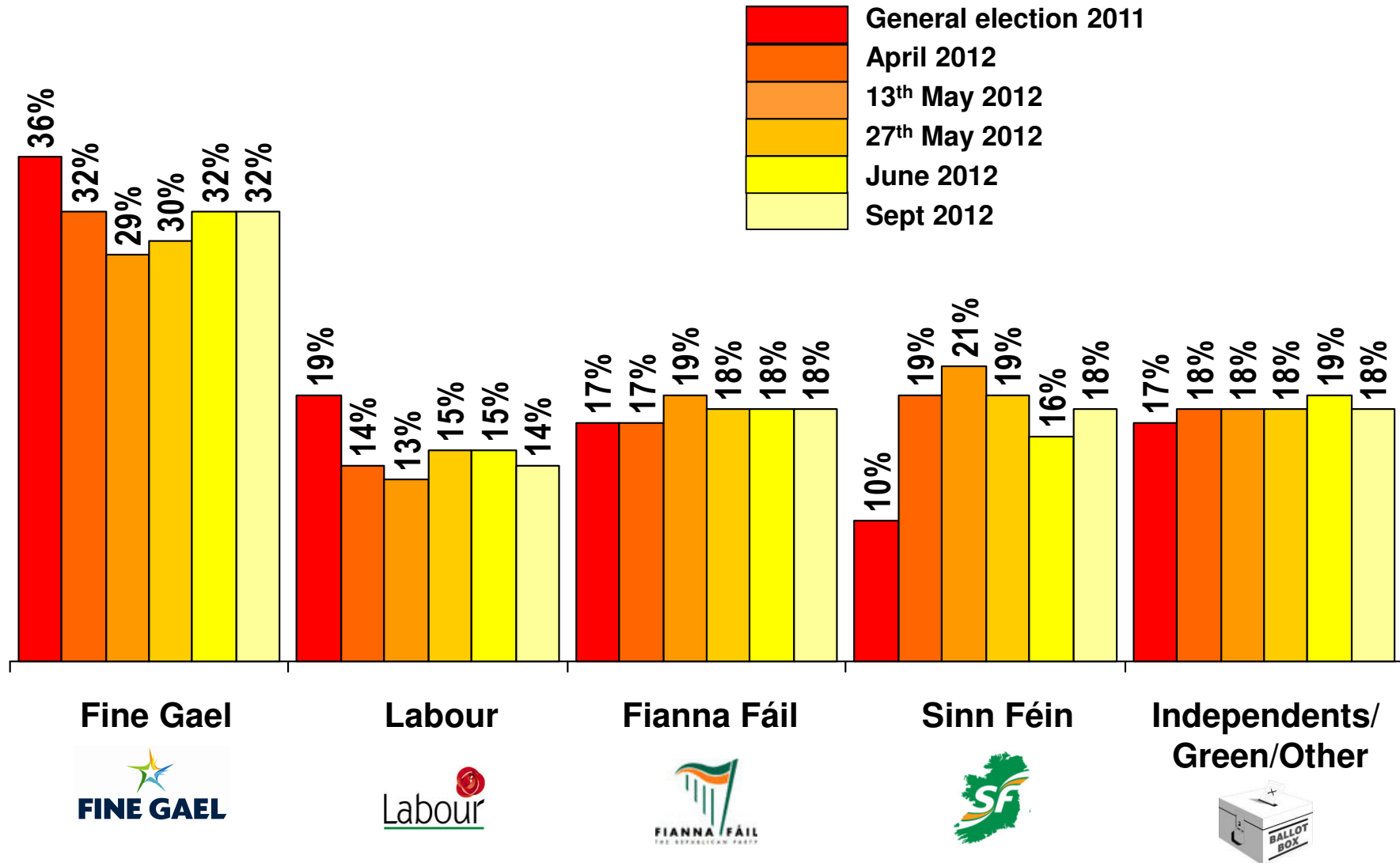


RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION CLARITY

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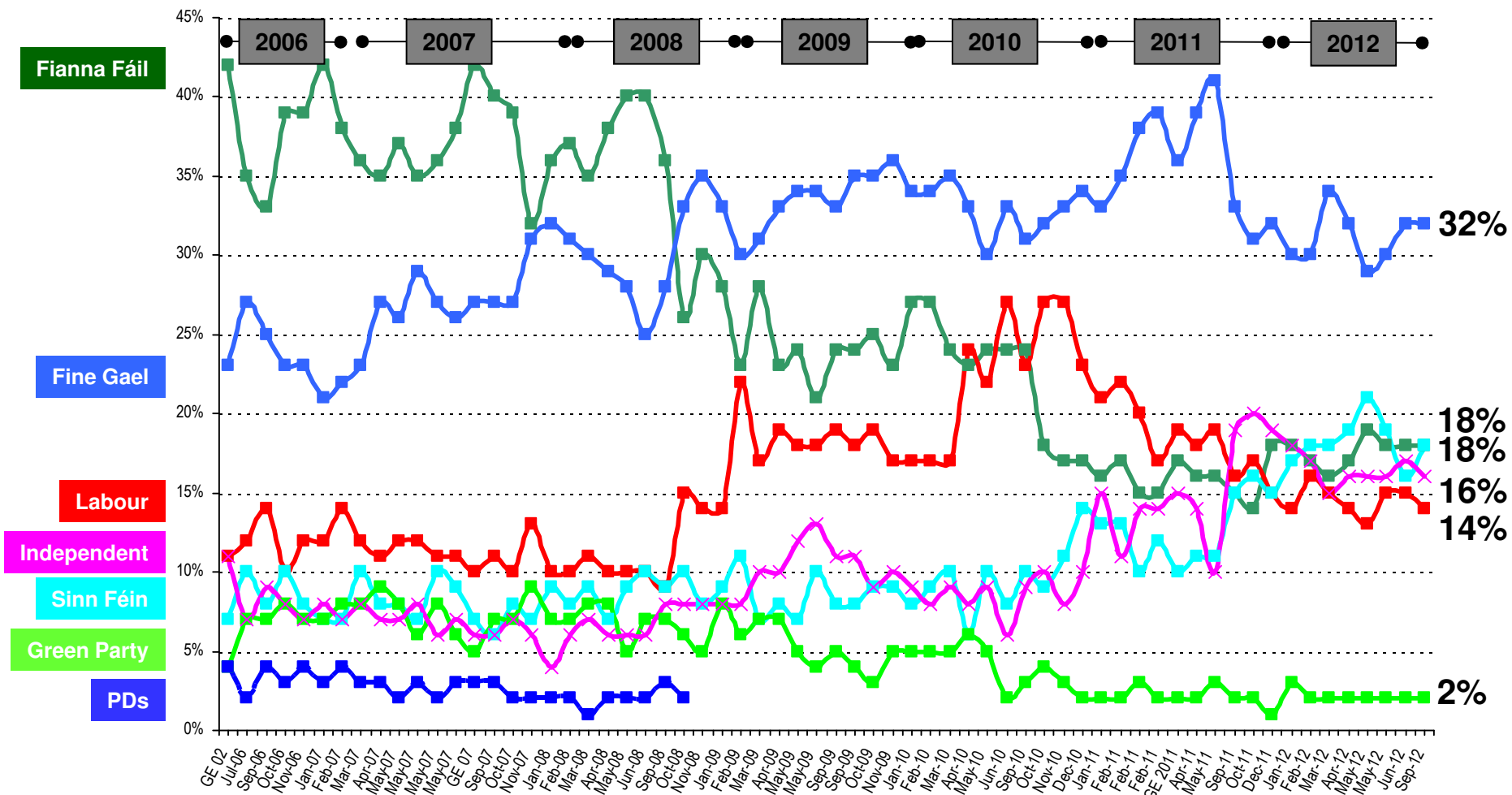


CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE			
	Core figures 23rd September 2012	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in 2011	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	25	32	36
Labour	11	14	19
Fianna Fáil	15	18	17
Sinn Féin	15	18	10
Independent candidates	12	16	13
Green Party	2	2	2
Socialist Party	<1	<1	1
Other Party	<1	<1	1
Undecided	20		

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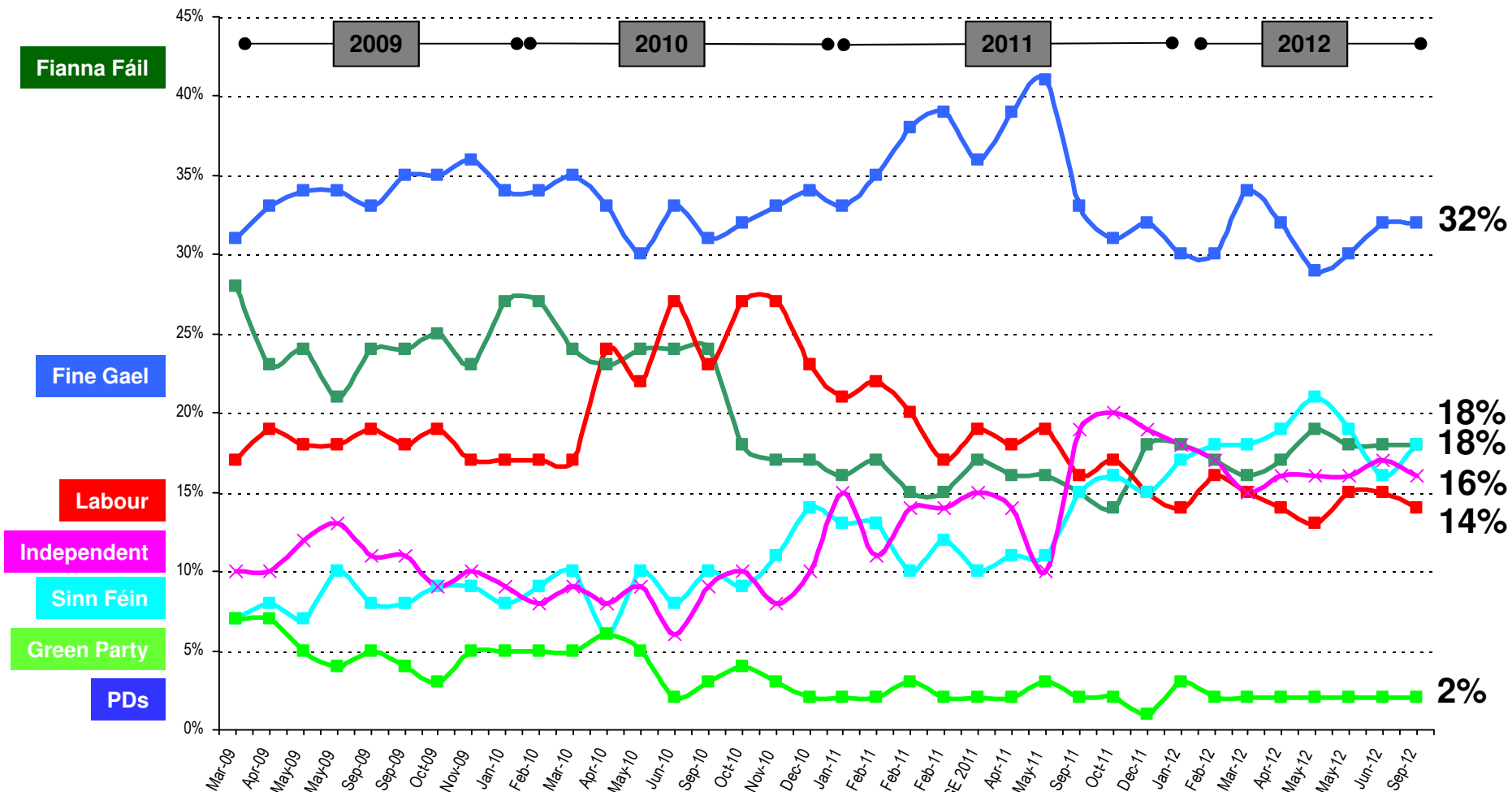
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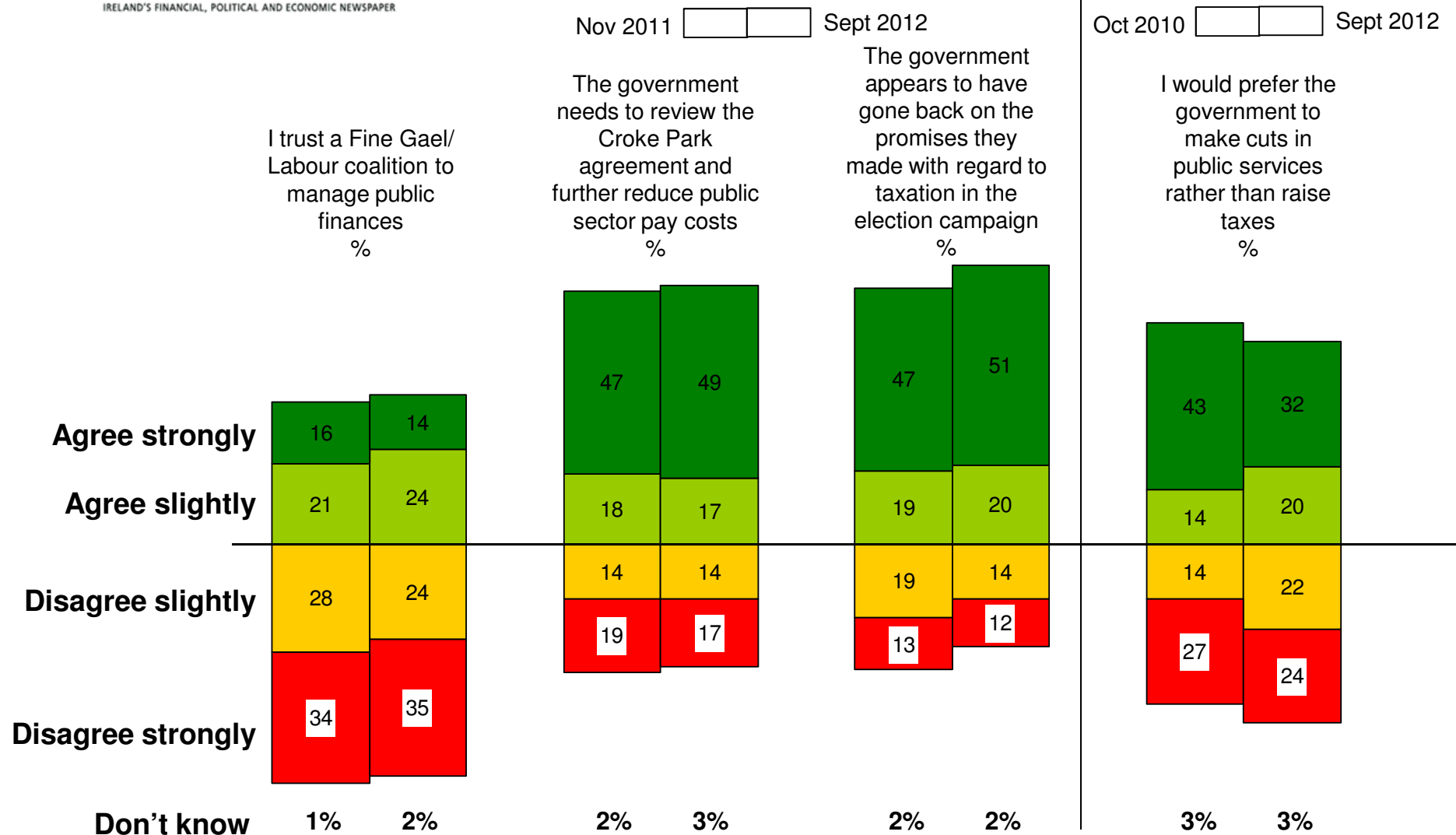
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2013 Budget

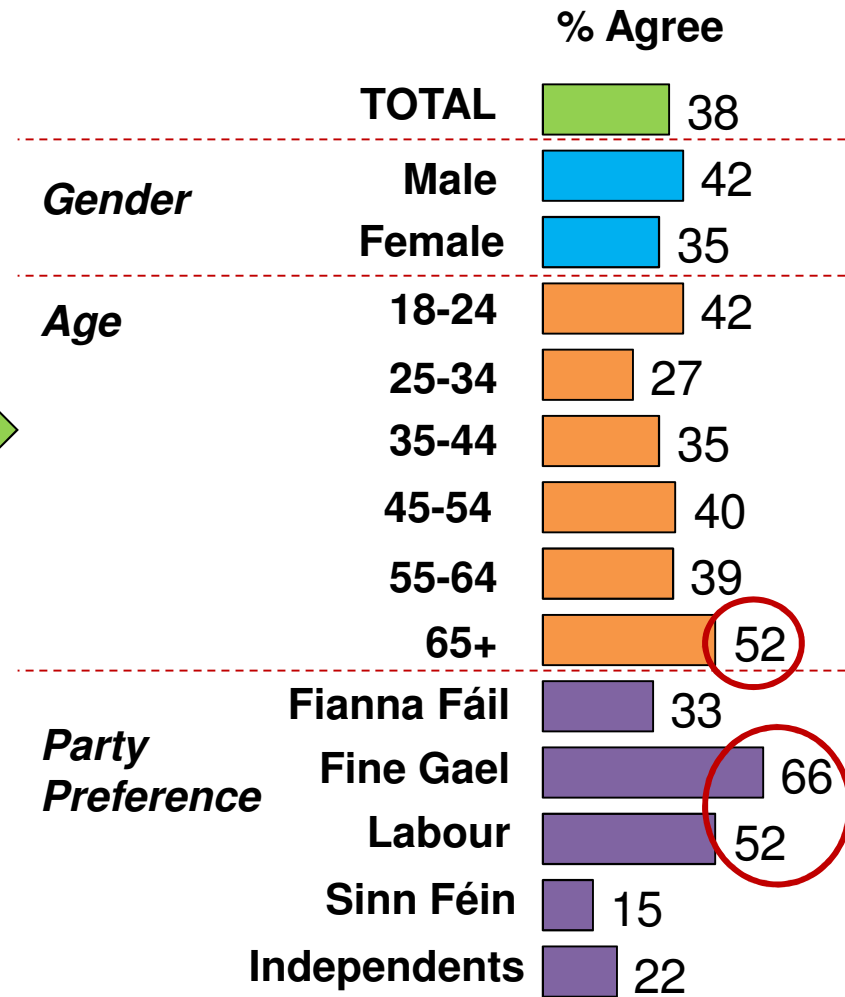
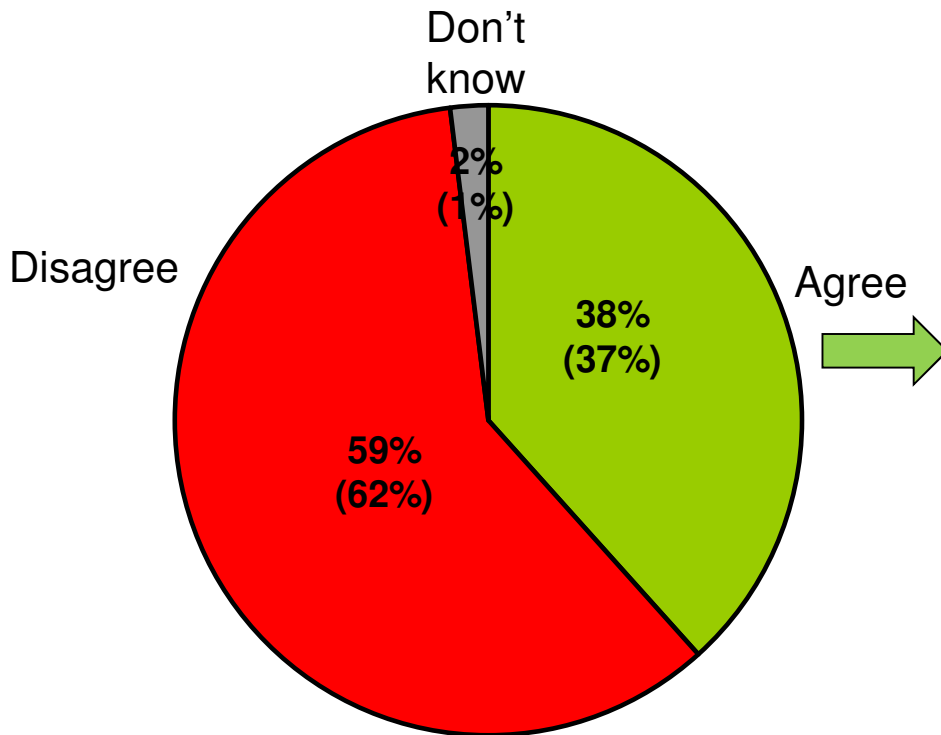
Attitudes towards 2013 Budget

(Base: All adults 18+)



I trust a Fine Gael/ Labour coalition to manage public finances

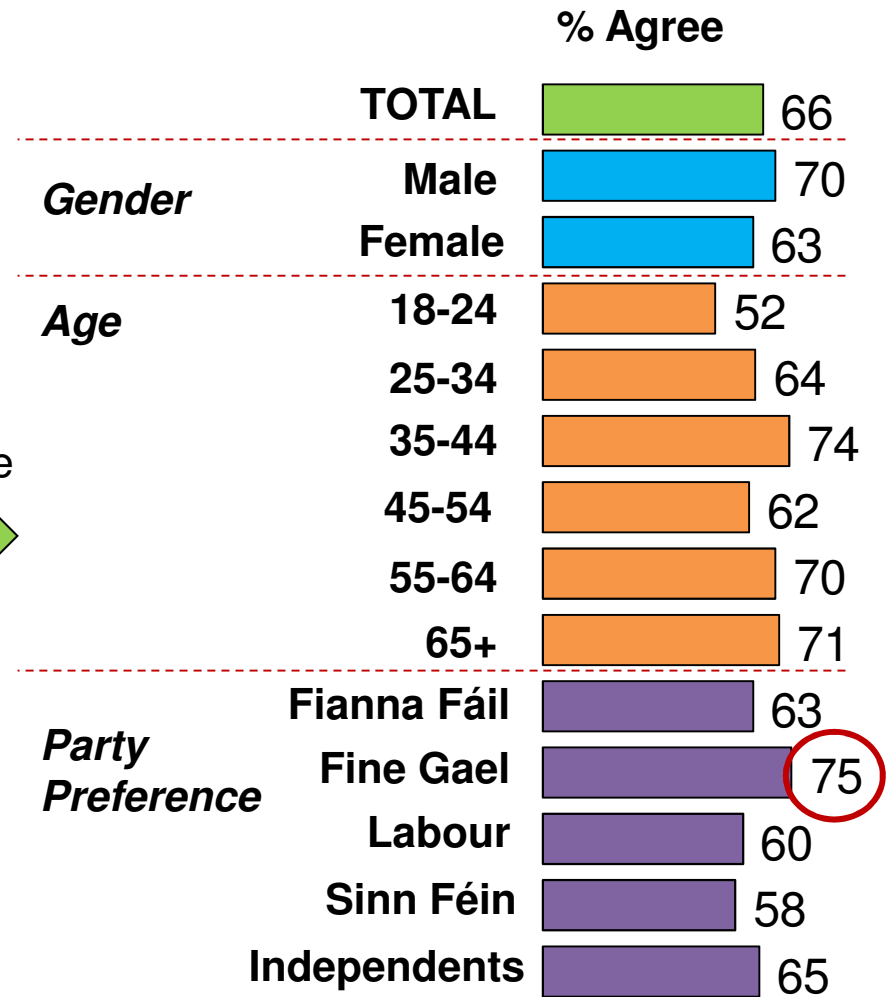
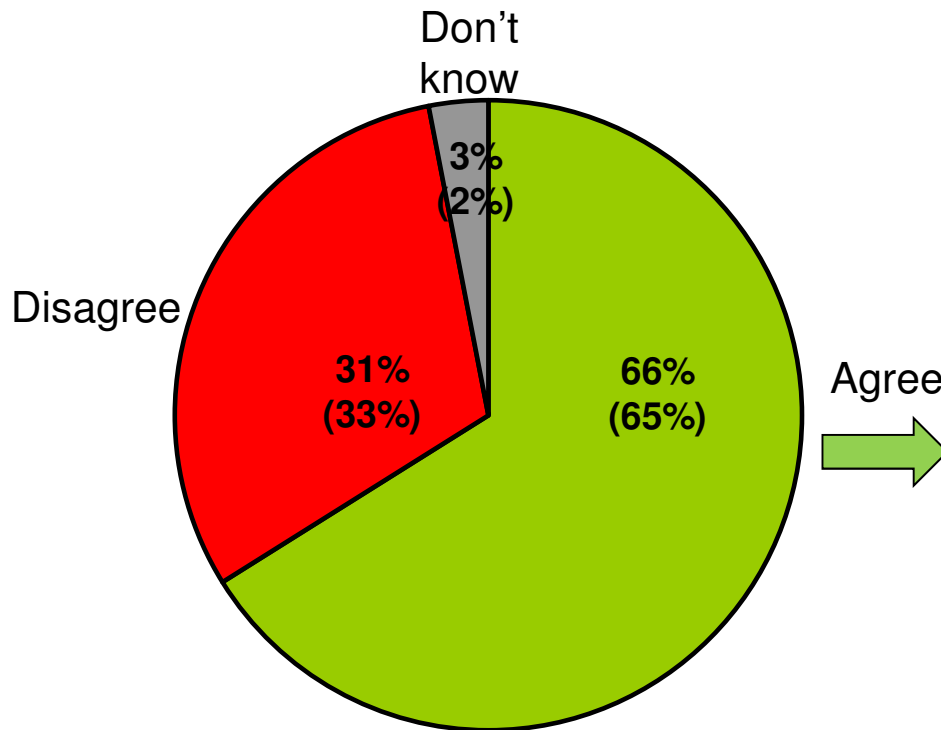
(Base: All adults 18+)



() Figures in brackets show November 2011 Results

The government needs to review the Croke Park agreement and further reduce public sector pay costs

(Base: All adults 18+)

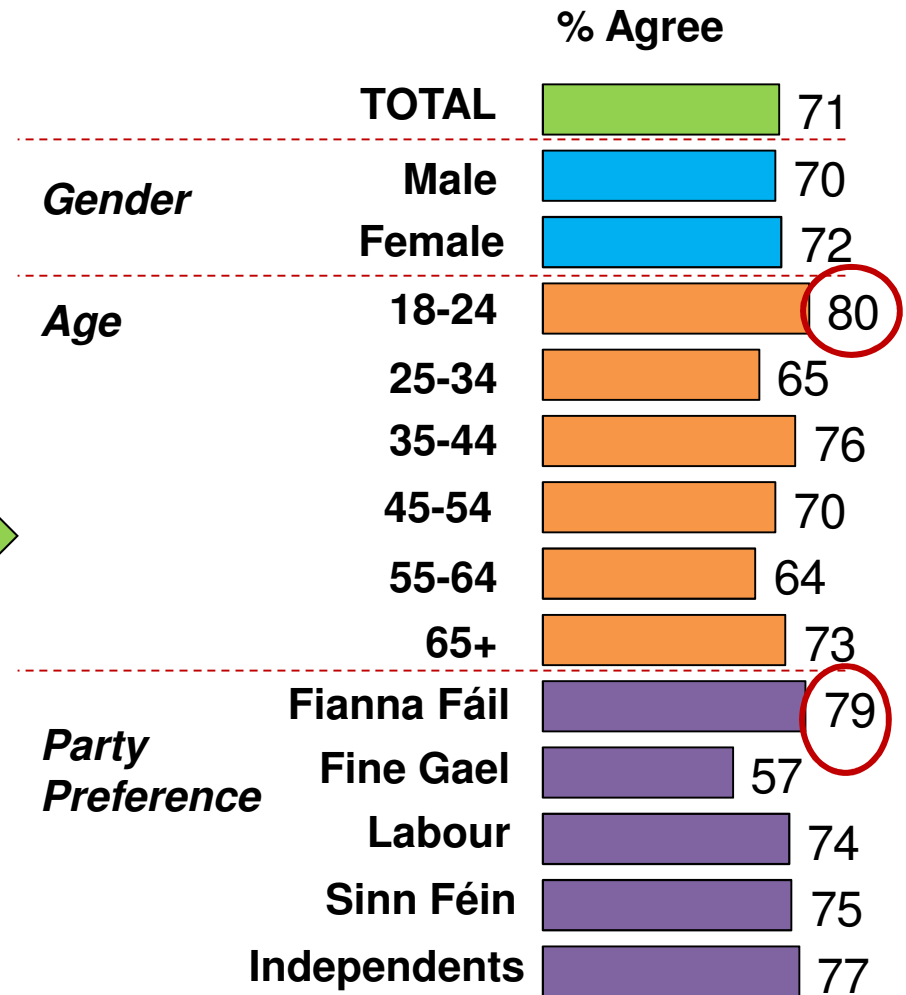
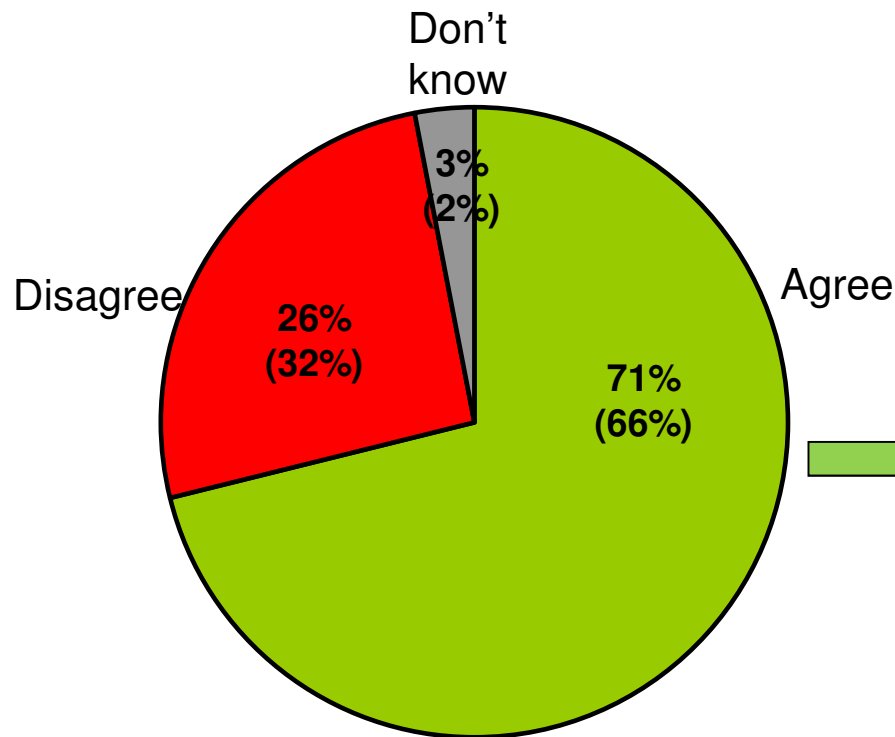


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The government appears to have gone back on the promises they made with regard to taxation in the election campaign.



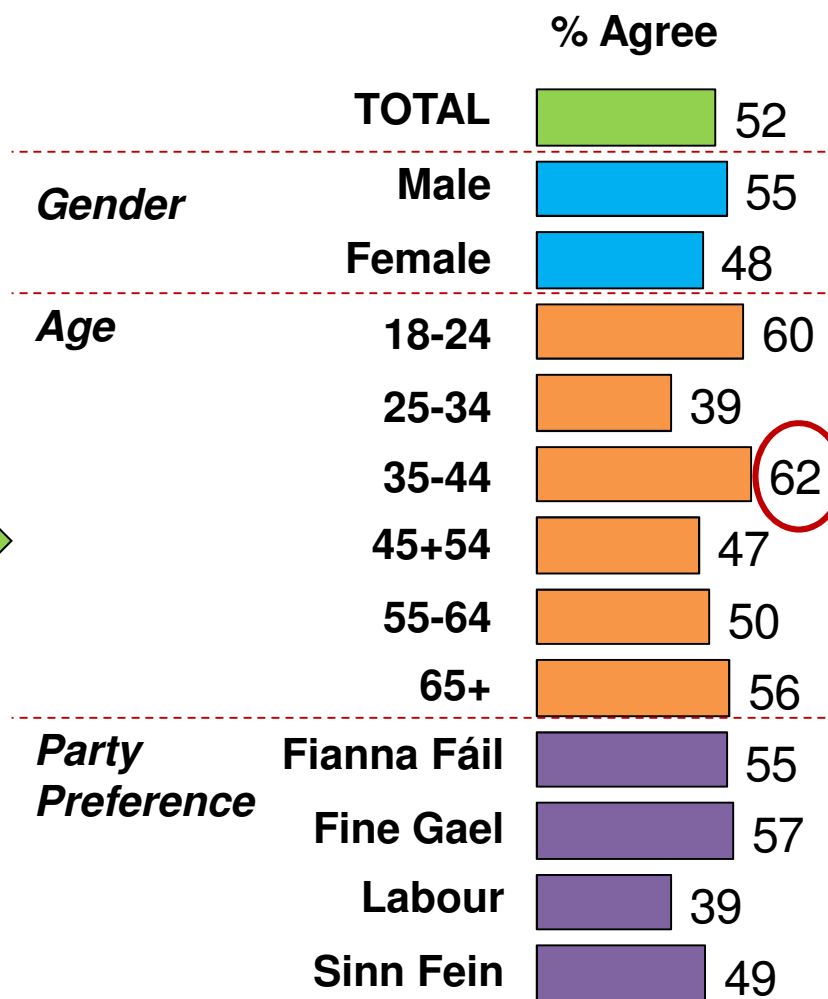
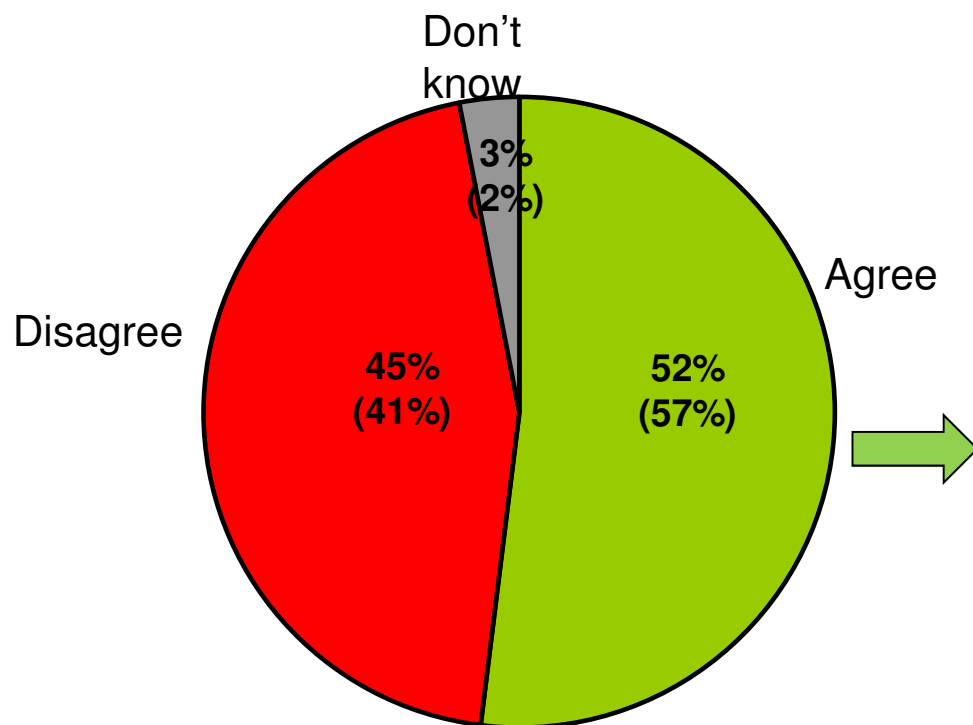
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I would prefer the government to make cuts in public services rather than raise taxes

(Base: All adults 18+)



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