



General Election Opinion Poll

21st December 2014



REDC

Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,004 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 15th – 17th December 2014.
- 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.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.



Lack of perceived benefit from economic growth hurting Government parties

Another poll, another decline in support for the government. While water charges have most certainly been a catalyst for upset, it is apparent from this poll that the disconnect between a clearly improving Irish economy and the day to day finances of everyday voters may be at the core of the discontent.

Fine Gael support continues fall again in December, if only marginally this month, with a drop of 1%. The resulting trend however has seen the party decline in every month since before the first non-austerity Budget for years in September, with the overall impact being a fall of 7% support in just three months.

While Labour had somewhat avoided association with the negativity surrounding the water charges and had seen steady if low support during the same period, that has now also come to an end. In December support for the party has declined again down to 6%, the lowest standing for the party in a RED C poll for 10 years.

How the government must now be cursing moving the Budget forward in the year to October? While this was move was prompted by the EU requirements for pre-budget information in October, the move was widely welcomed by many in Government, suggesting it would bring clarity to voters in December and reduce fears of the budget on crucial December spending.

The reality is that it is the gap between the budget itself and the implementation of the improved tax measures that only come into place in January that appears to be doing the government no favours. This is characterised by the fact that the majority of voters still simply haven't see any personal improvement in their finances despite an improved economy. Only two in every five voters feels that the recovery has benefitted them personally, leaving the majority (60%) with no apparent personal improvement from the recovery.

Of course this is because for most voters any economic improvements would come from the measures taken in the budget that simply have not been implemented yet. It is only among the youngest age groups at college or in early working life where more than half feel the recovery has impacted on them.

Lack of perceived benefit from economic growth hurting Government parties

The result is that voters are far less inclined to trust the Government parties to manage the public finances, a measure that has regularly been seen to closely correlate with government support. Pre Budget 2014 the government had one of the highest economic competence ratings among voters for some time, with 40% of the electorate suggesting they trusted Fine Gael and Labour to manage the public finances. Three months later that economic competence rating has fallen by 7%, with just 33% now trusting the government parties. Trust has particularly fallen back among women, those in 45-54 year old age groups and among current Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein supporters. It is also clear that Labour voters have less trust than their partners in government, as apart from Sinn Fein voters, they are most likely to feel the government has not been doing a good job managing the economy.

Likewise the proportion of voters that believe the country is on the “right track” has also declined significantly. Prior to the budget the majority (61%) felt the country was generally on the right track, now this has fallen back by 7% to just over half (54%). Older voters are those most likely to have changed their view, as well as women those living in Dublin and of course Sinn Fein voters.

The clear correlation between economic competence and voter support means it is vital for the Government parties that they regain lost ground here. The question is whether the delay between announcing the budget, and the measures actually coming into effect, has in itself lessened the impact they may have on voters when they do eventually arrive in their pay packets. Sinn Fein will be sincerely hoping that the impact has been lost, or can be countered, as in the midst of this turmoil their support continues to climb gradually ever higher.

Will Independent candidates really take 30% share of the vote at the next election?

A lot has been made of the rise of support for Independent candidates in the polls, (rightly so with their share now standing at 28% in this poll) and how this might work in terms of a government after the next General Election. While they will of course do well, it is unlikely that support will remain at such a high level when the reality of forming a government is put to voters.

Traditionally in between elections when voters were less connected to the political situation and unsure of how they might vote in a year or more time, polling has seen high levels of undecided voters. The proportion of the electorate suggesting they were undecided had often been seen to reach as high as 25% of all those likely to vote. Yet at the moment the level of undecided voters stands at just 12% of those likely to vote in any General Election.

This may suggest a subtle change in mind set among those being polled who haven't really made up their mind how they will vote, from simply stating they are unsure how they will vote, to instead being ABP (Anyone But a Party). However, it is quite likely that to some extent that claiming you will support an Independent candidate now, remains a way of not registering support for a party mid election, somewhat in the same way as saying you were undecided in the past.

At the same time it is likely that more Independent TD's will eventually form parties or groupings, and when that happens it will either draw voters closer to voting for them at an actual election or potentially pushes them away. I would not therefore be surprised to see support for Independent candidates fall back as we move closer to an actual election and voters start to think about what voting for an Independent candidate might mean in reality, and the real impact their vote might have on the next government, in particular its stability. This is exactly why there are so many Independent candidates right now furiously talking about forming working groups in an effort to persuade voters that there is value in supporting them at the next election. It will be interesting to see when this move starts to happen, how many voters they can retain, and where exactly those that decide supporting a party is more effective end up.

First Preference Vote Intention – December 2014

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael
21% -1

Labour
6% -2

Fianna Fail
19% +1

Sinn Fein
24% +2

Independent/
Other
30% =

Undecided Voters
12% =

REDC

First Preference Vote Intention – December 2014

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (showing impact of past vote weighting, and likely voter filters)

(Base: All adults 18+)

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT					
	Core figures	Impact of Past vote weighting	Likely Voters	Excluding Undecided	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	18	18	18	21	36
Labour	5	5	5	6	19
Fianna Fáil	16	15	17	19	17
Sinn Féin	20	21	21	24	10
Independent candidates	25	24	25	28	13
Green Party	2	2	2	2	2
Socialist Party	-	-	-	-	1
Other Party	*	*	*	*	1
Undecided	14	15	12		

First Preference Vote Intention – June-December 2014

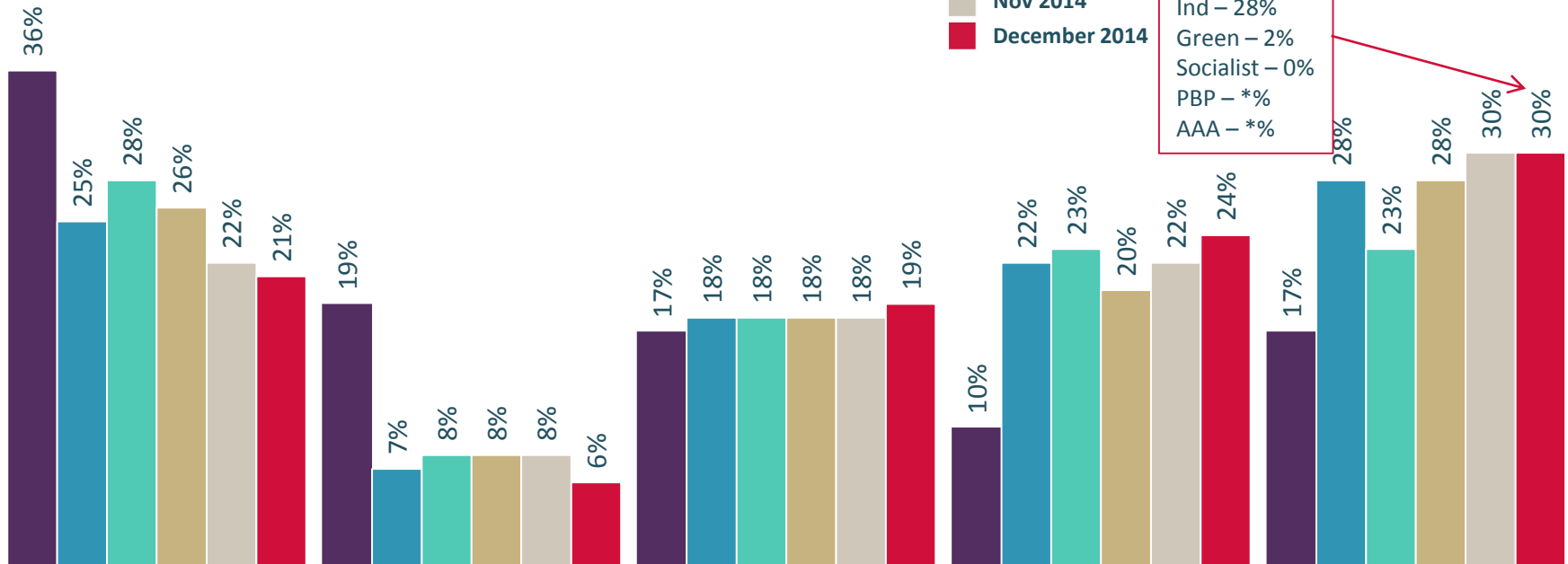
If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

- General election 2011
- June 2014
- Sept 2014
- Oct 2014
- Nov 2014
- December 2014



Split;
 Ind – 28%
 Green – 2%
 Socialist – 0%
 PBP – *%
 AAA – *%



Fine Gael
21%

Labour
6%

Fianna Fail
19%

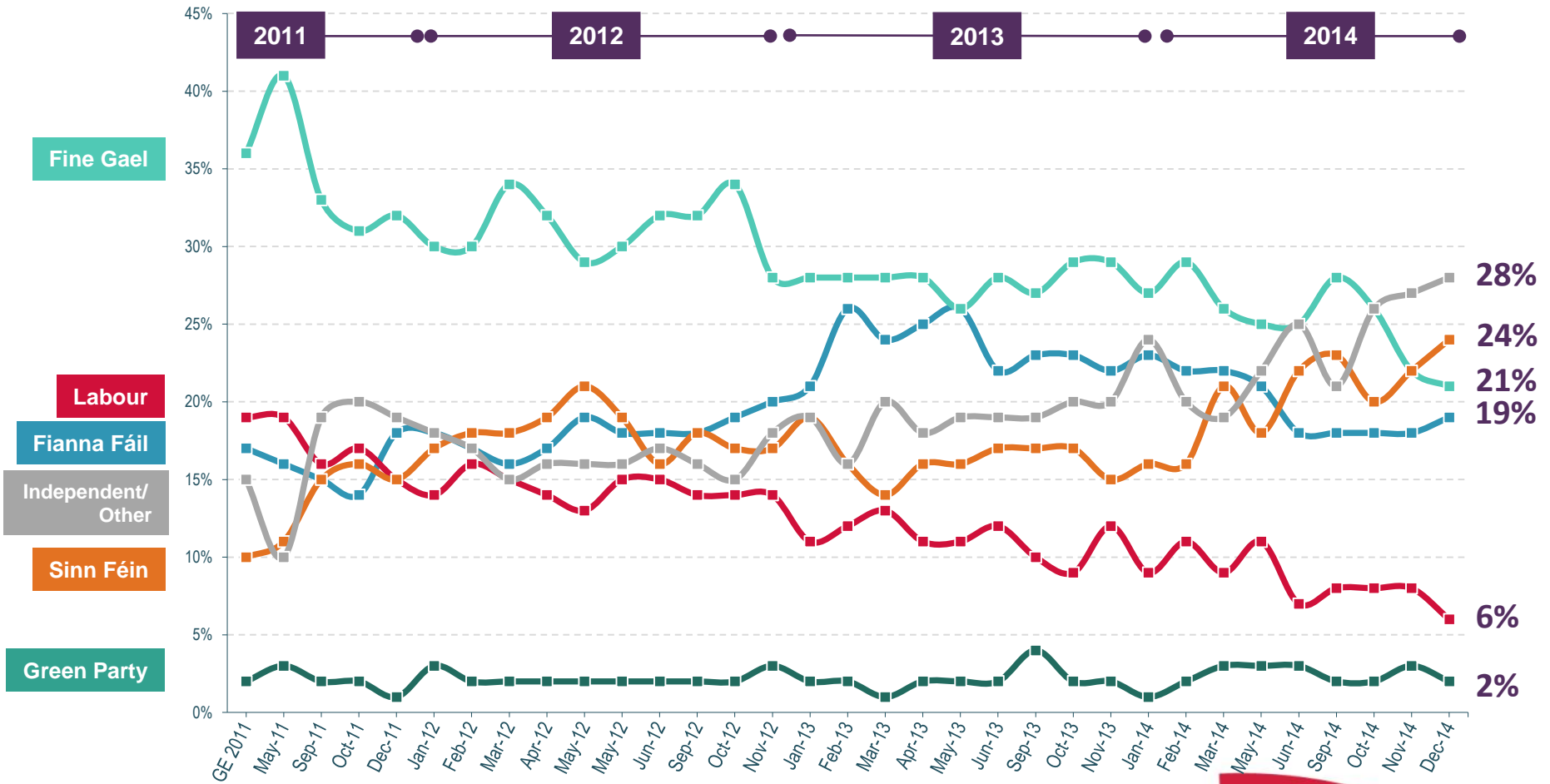
Sinn Fein
24%

Independent/
Other
30%

First Preference Vote Intention – 2012-2014

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

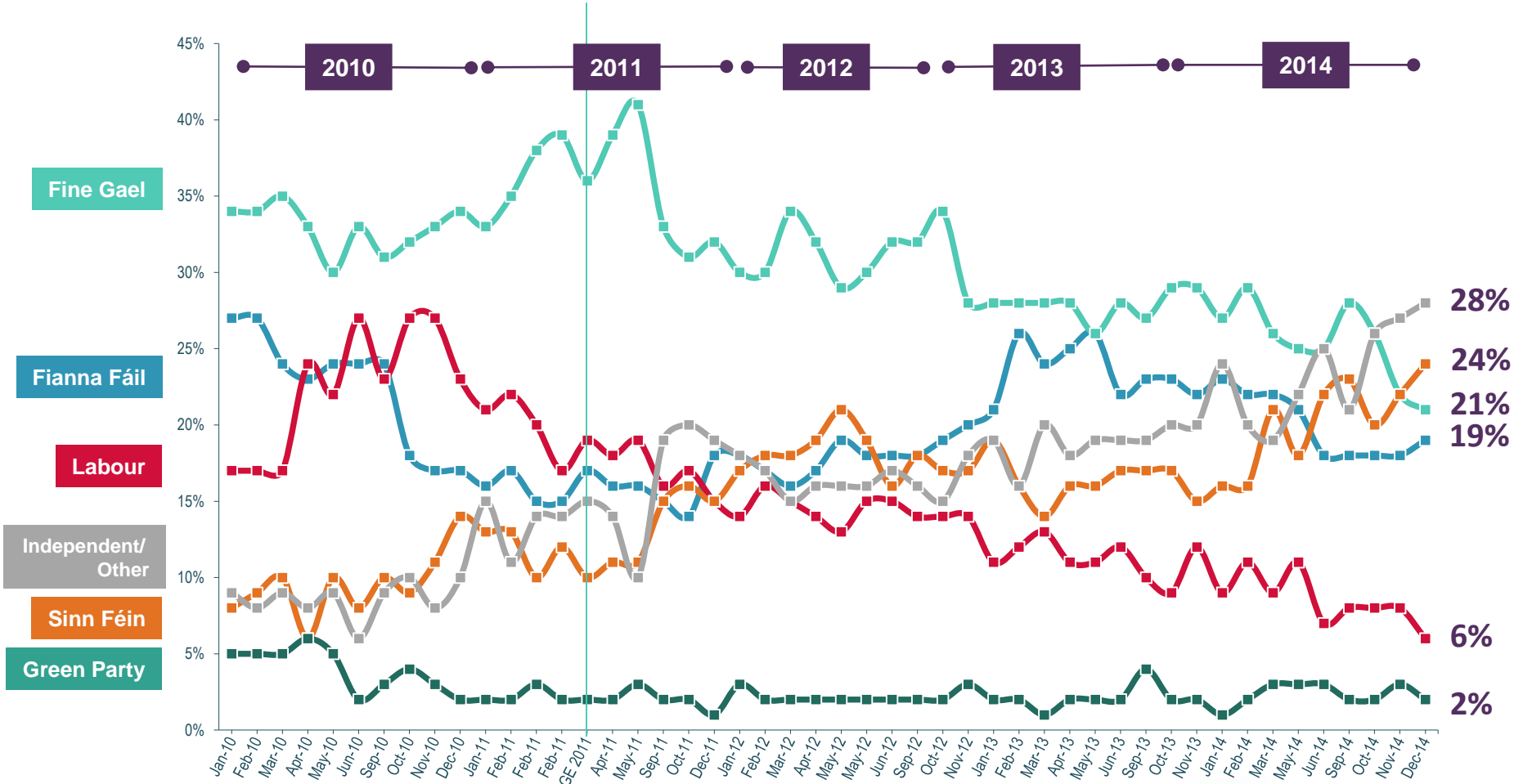
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2014

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

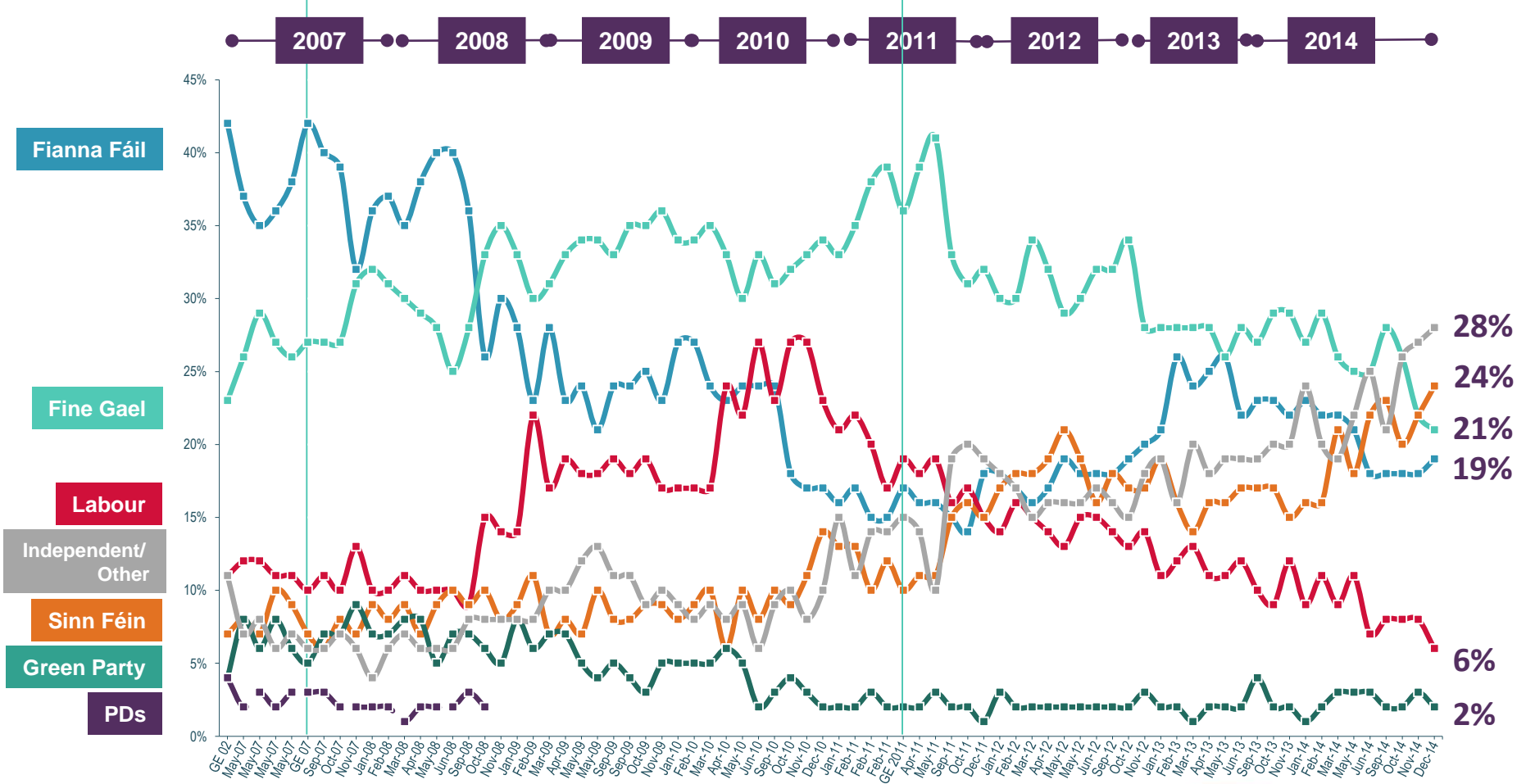
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2007 to 2014

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

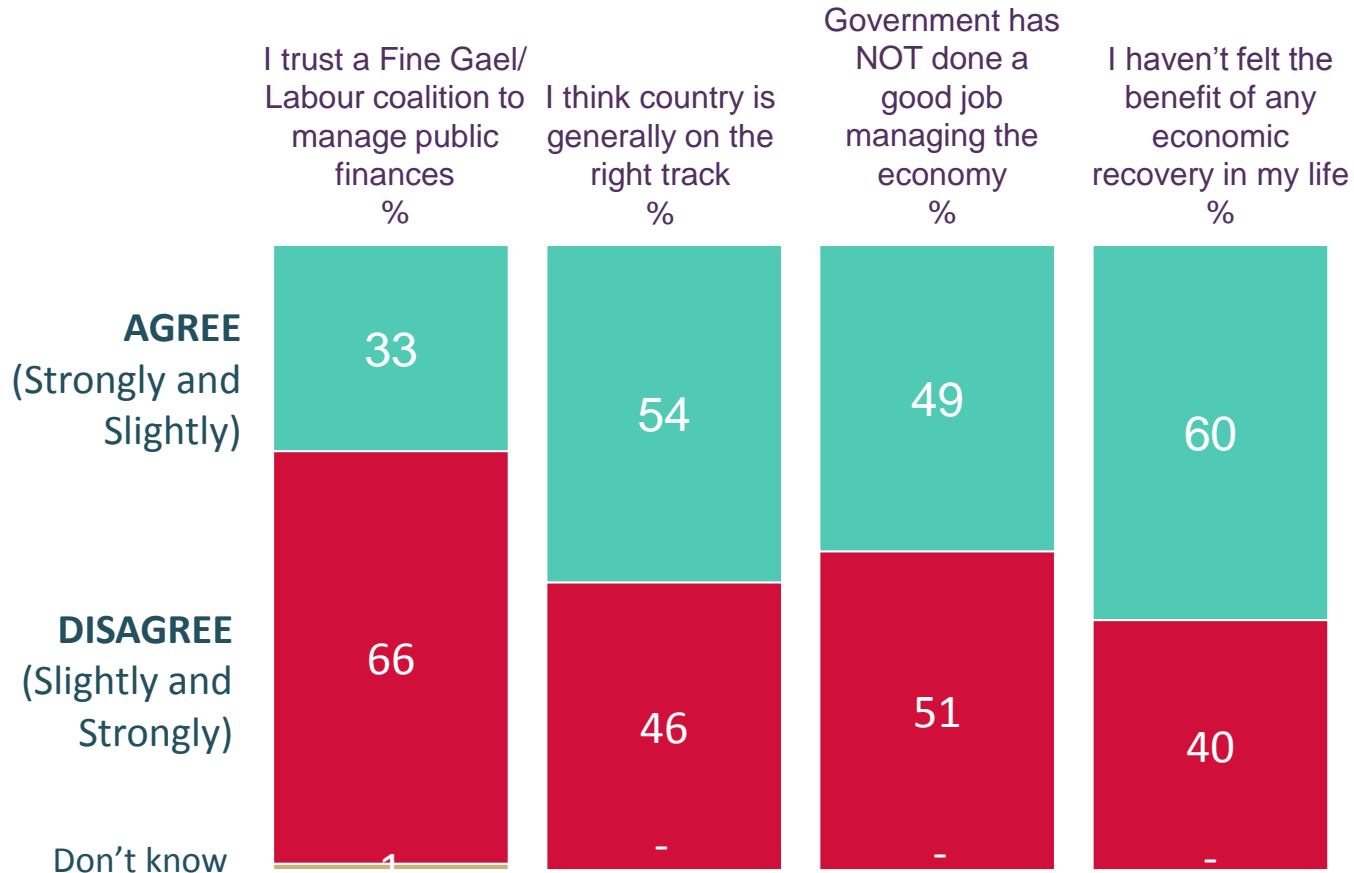
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Attitudes towards Government and the Economy

(Base: All adults 18+)

Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

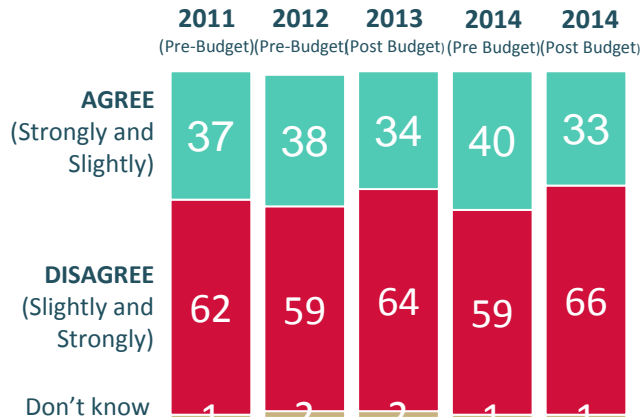


Who trusts Fine Gael/ Labour to manage public finances?

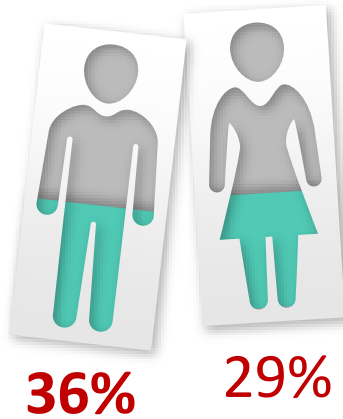
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

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

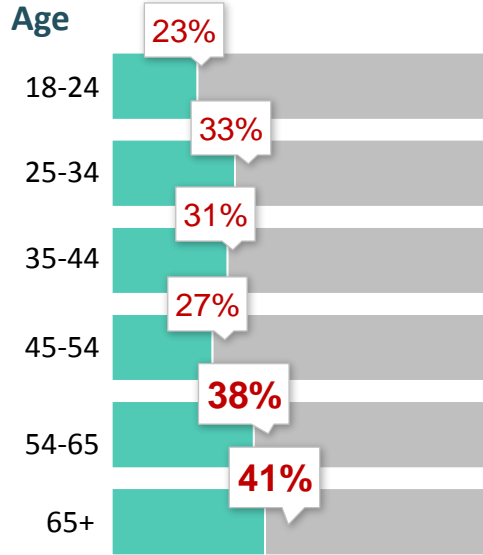
(Base: All likely 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

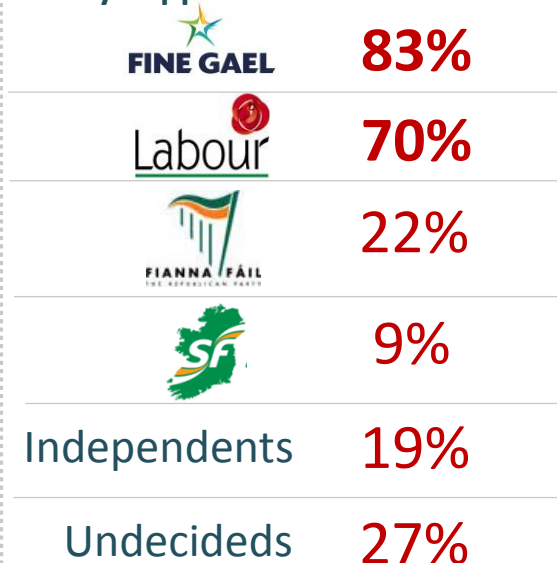
Higher Social Grades: **36%**



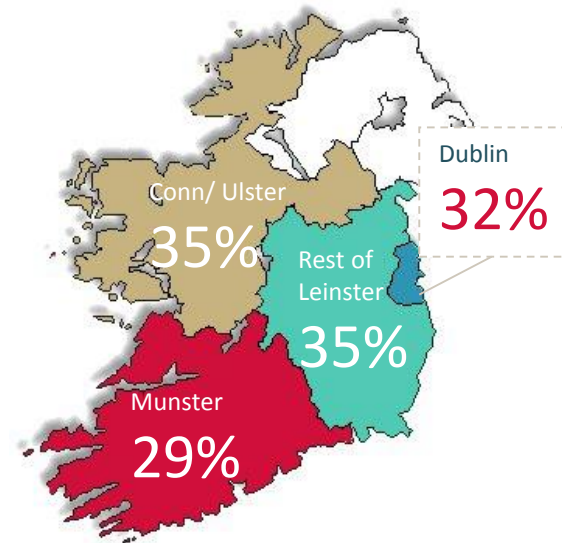
Lower Social Grades: **27%**



Party Support



Region

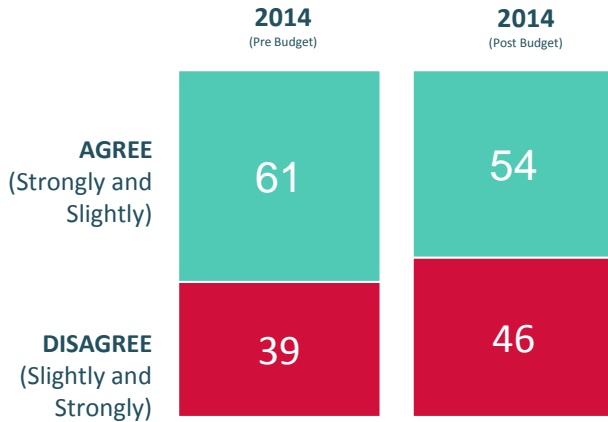


Who thinks the country is generally on the right track?

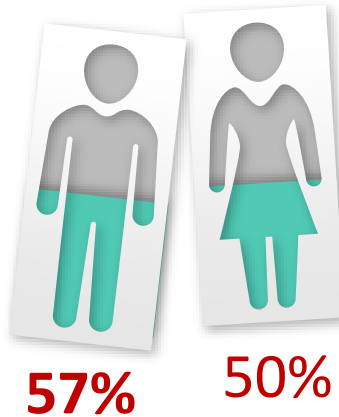
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I think country is generally on the right track

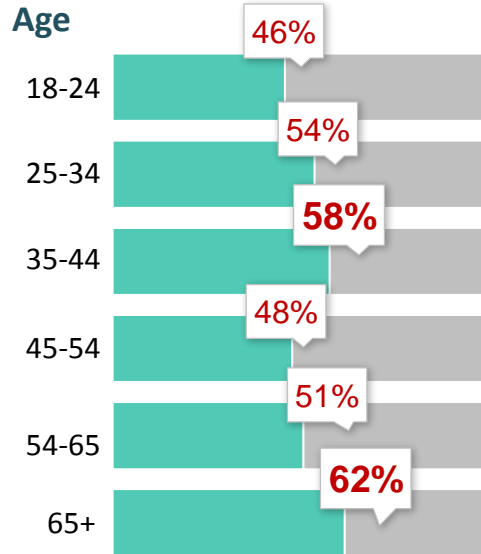
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **58%**



Lower Social Grades: **49%**



Party Support

FINE GAEL **84%**

Labour **72%**

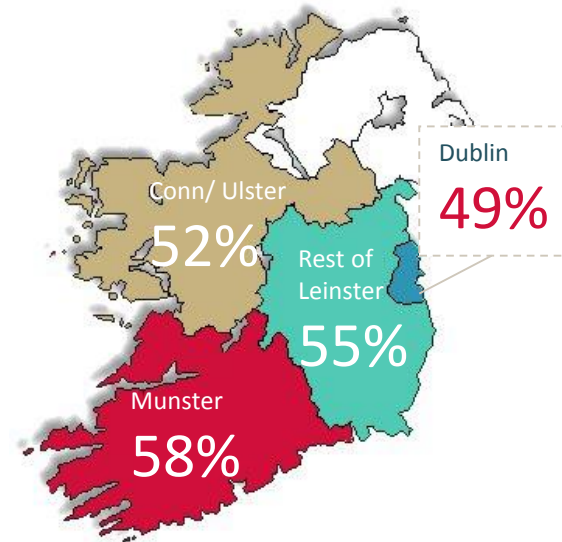
FIANNA FÁIL **59%**

SF **25%**

Independents **50%**

Undecideds **54%**

Region

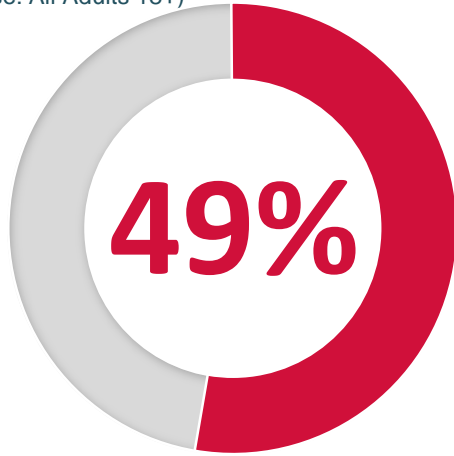


Who believes the government has **NOT** doing a good job managing the economy?

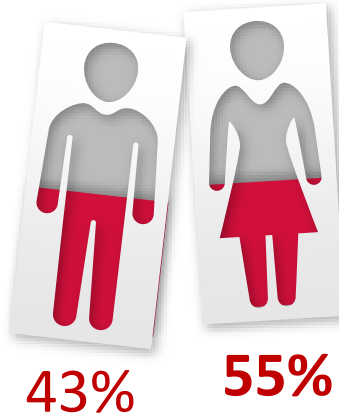
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

The government has NOT done a good job managing the economy

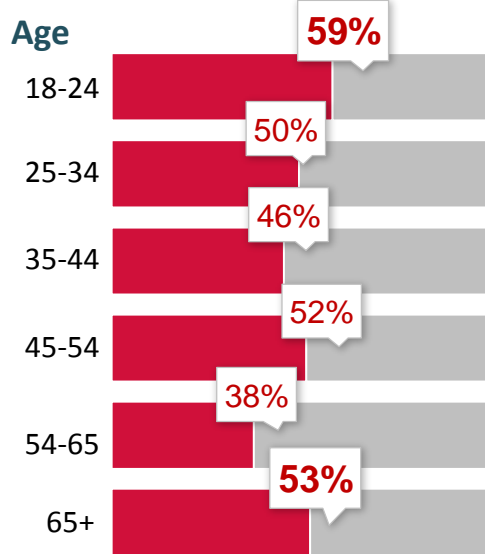
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **52%**



Lower Social Grades: **48%**



Party Support

 **40%**

 **55%**

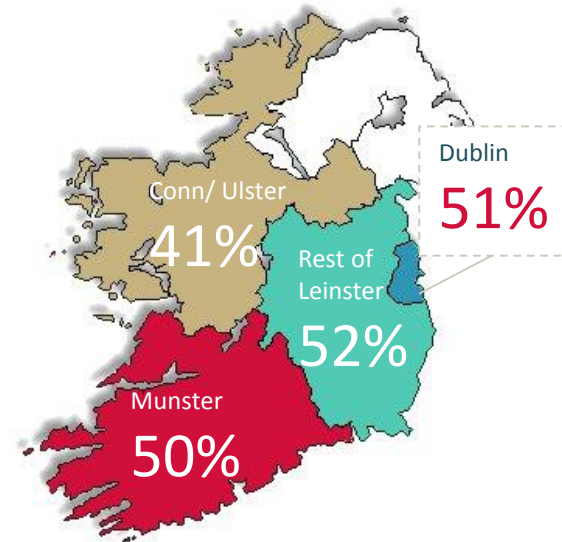
 **50%**

 **56%**

Independents **51%**

Undecideds **40%**

Region

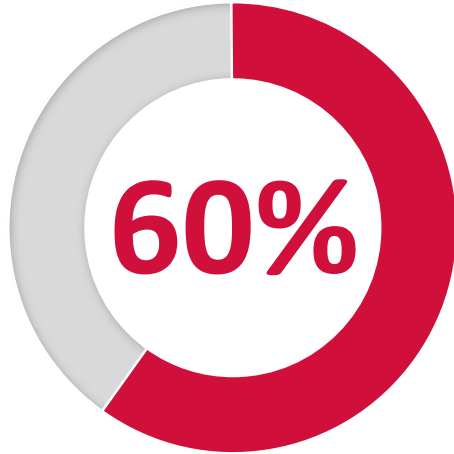


Who has NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in their life?

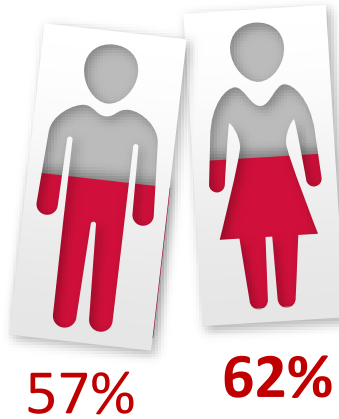
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I have NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in my life.

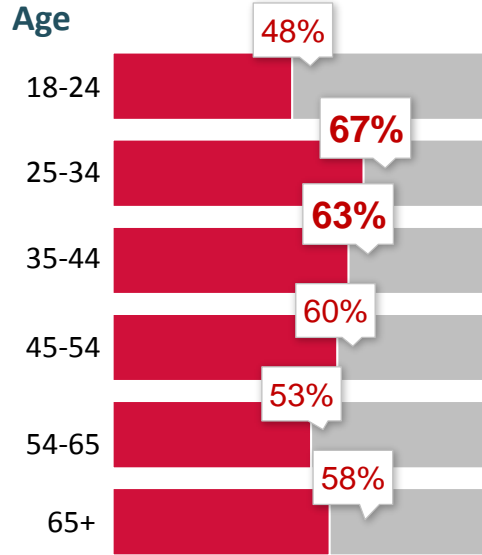
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 57%



Lower Social Grades: 62%



Party Support

 53%

 54%

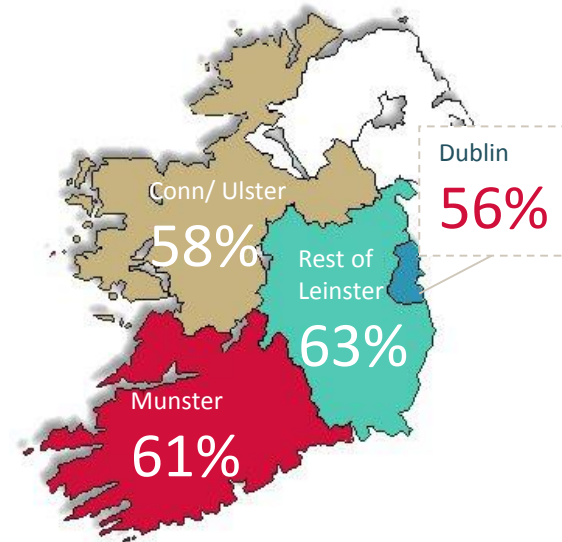
 59%

 65%

Independents 62%

Undecideds 57%

Region



The Views of Current & Lapsed Government Party Supporters

	Current Fine Gael Voters	Lapsed Fine Gael Voters	Diff. between Current and Lapsed	Current Labour Voters	Lapsed Labour Voters	Diff. between Current and Lapsed
I trust a Fine Gael/ Labour coalition to manage public finances	83%	28%	-55%	70%	31%	-39%
I think country is generally on the right track	84%	52%	-32%	72%	43%	-29%
The government has NOT done a good job managing the economy	40%	50%	+10%	55%	54%	-1%
I have NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in my life	53%	62%	+9%	54%	58%	+4%