

Irish Demographic Polling Datasets

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Abstract

The Irish Demographic Polling Dataset collects results on Irish voters' vote intentions, satisfaction with the government, and approval of party leaders. All data are available for the full set of respondents, and various sub-samples, such as age groups, gender, region, and social class. Currently, the datasets consider up to 70 polls, published between 2011 and 2022. After summarising the variables and structure of the data, we briefly discuss advantages and limitations of sub-group analyses by addressing three typical questions relating to Irish party politics. We hope the Irish Demographic Polling Datasets will help researchers and practioners analyse continuity and changes in Irish voters' party preferences and political opinions.

1 Introduction

The Irish Demographic Polling Datasets contain results from survey reports provided by Irish pollsters. These reports are available as PDF files online and contain cross-tables for various sub-samples. We extracted these data by combining automated extraction using Python and manual coding. Our datasets contain information on (weighted) party support among all respondents and for various sub-groups like age, social class, gender, region, and future vote choice. This document summarises the datasets, codings, and variables and provides various

descriptive tables and plots. We exemplify the advantages and shortcomings of subgroup analyses in the last section.

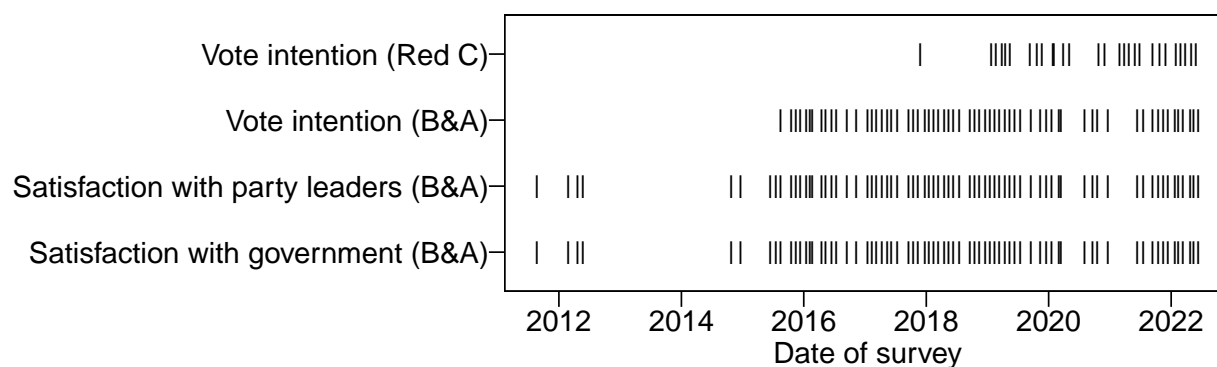
If you use these datasets for news reports or academic research, please consider citing:

Thomas Pluck and Stefan Müller (2022). *Irish Demographic Polling Datasets*.

URL: <https://github.com/Irish-Dem-Polling/datasets>

We want to thank RedC Research and Behaviour & Attitudes for continuously publishing survey reports for the public. If you use individual surveys, please cite and reference the pollsters' reports rather than this dataset.¹

The figure below summarises the available polls in our dataset. Each horizontal bar indicates one survey.



2 Datasets

2.1 First-Preference Vote Choice

We gathered information on first-preference vote choice provided in survey reports by Behaviour & Attitudes and RedC.

The tables below summarise the number of polls and time spans.

¹Reports provided by Behaviour & Attitudes are available [here](#). The reports released by RedC can be accessed [here](#).

Behaviour and Attitudes

The dataset `data_banda_firstpref_prop` contains first-preference vote choice for various subsamples and the full set of respondents released in 64 surveys. Results are reported as proportions. The dataset `data_banda_firstpref_count` contains the *weighted* counts provided in the survey reports. The first available poll was released on 15 August 2015. The latest poll included in the current version of the dataset was released on 12 June 2022. Table 1 describes the variables included in the dataset.

Table 1: Variable description: First-preference vote choice (Behaviour and Attitudes)

| Variable | Details |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <code>date</code> | Release of poll |
| <code>date_start</code> | Survey fielding: start |
| <code>date_end</code> | Survey fielding: end |
| <code>date_middle</code> | Survey fielding: middle |
| <code>sample_size</code> | Sample size |
| <code>party</code> | First-preference vote intention |
| <code>total</code> | Vote intention: All respondents |
| <code>male</code> | Vote intention: Male respondents |
| <code>female</code> | Vote intention: Female respondents |
| <code>age_18_34</code> | Vote intention by age group: 18-24 |
| <code>age_35_54</code> | Vote intention by age group: 35-54 |
| <code>age_55</code> | Vote intention by age group: 55+ |
| <code>class_abc1</code> | Social class: ABC1 |
| <code>class_c2de</code> | Social class: C2DE |
| <code>class_f</code> | Social class: F |
| <code>region_dublin</code> | Region: Dublin |
| <code>region_leinster</code> | Region: Rest of Leinster |
| <code>region_munster</code> | Region: Munster |
| <code>region_connacht_ulster</code> | Region: Connacht/Ulster |
| <code>area_urban</code> | Urban region |
| <code>area_rural</code> | Rural region |
| <code>const_seats_3</code> | 3-seat constituency |
| <code>const_seats_4</code> | 4-seat constituency |
| <code>const_seats_5</code> | 5-seat constituency |

RedC

The dataset `data_redc_firstpref_prop` contains first-preference vote choice from 28 surveys for various subsamples and the full set of respondents. Results are reported as proportions. The first available poll was released on 26 November 2017. The latest poll included in the current version of the dataset was released on 29 May 2022. The dataset currently considers 28 surveys. Table 2 describes the variables included in the dataset.

Table 2: Variable description: First-preference vote choice (RedC)

| Variable | Details |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| date | Release of poll |
| date_start | Survey fielding: start |
| date_end | Survey fielding: end |
| date_middle | Survey fielding: middle |
| sample_size | Sample size |
| party | First-preference vote intention |
| total | Vote intention: All respondents |
| male | Vote intention: Male respondents |
| female | Vote intention: Female respondents |
| age_18_34 | Vote intention by age group: 18-24 |
| age_35_54 | Vote intention by age group: 35-54 |
| age_55 | Vote intention by age group: 55+ |
| class_abc1 | Social class: ABC1 |
| class_c2de | Social class: C2DE |
| region_dublin | Region: Dublin |
| region_leinster_rest | Region: Rest of Leinster |
| region_munster | Region: Munster |
| region_connacht_ulster | Region: Connacht/Ulster |

2.2 Satisfaction with the Government

The dataset `data_banda_govsat_prop` contains information on the satisfaction with the government for various subsamples and the full set of respondents. Results are reported as proportions. The dataset `data_banda_govsat_count` contains the *weighted* counts provided in the survey reports. The first available poll was released on 24 August 2011. The latest poll included in the current version of the dataset was released on 12 June 2022. 72 surveys are currently included in our dataset. Table 3 describes the variables included in the dataset.

2.3 Satisfaction with Party Leaders

The dataset `data_banda_leaders_prop` contains information on the satisfaction with the leaders of several political parties for various subsamples and the full set of respondents. Results are reported as proportions. The dataset `data_banda_leaders_count` contains the *weighted* counts provided in the survey reports. The first of the 72 polls was released on 24 August 2011. The latest poll included in the current version of the dataset was released on 12 June 2022. Table 4 describes the variables included in the dataset.

Table 3: Variable description: Satisfaction with government (Behaviour and Attitudes)

| Variable | Details |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| date | Release of poll |
| date_start | Survey fielding: start |
| date_end | Survey fielding: end |
| date_middle | Survey fielding: middle |
| sample_size | Sample size |
| satisfaction_government | Satisfaction with government |
| total | Vote intention: All respondents |
| male | Vote intention: Male respondents |
| female | Vote intention: Female respondents |
| age_18_34 | Vote intention by age group: 18-24 |
| age_35_54 | Vote intention by age group: 35-54 |
| age_55 | Vote intention by age group: 55+ |
| class_abc1 | Social class: ABC1 |
| class_c2de | Social class: C2DE |
| class_f | Social class: F |
| region_dublin | Region: Dublin |
| region_leinster | Region: Rest of Leinster |
| region_munster | Region: Munster |
| region_connacht_ulster | Region: Connacht/Ulster |
| area_urban | Urban region |
| area_rural | Rural region |
| const_seats_3 | 3-seat constituency |
| const_seats_4 | 4-seat constituency |
| const_seats_5 | 5-seat constituency |
| voting_vote | Voting: will definitely vote |
| voting_prob_vote | Voting: will probably vote |
| voting_undecided | Voting: undecided |
| voting_not_vote | Voting: will not vote |
| future_fianna_fail | Future vote: Fianna Fáil |
| future_fine_gael | Future vote: Fine Gael |
| future_labour | Future vote: Labour |
| future_greens | Future vote: Green Party |
| future_sinn_fein | Future vote: Sinn Féin |
| future_ind_oth | Future vote: Other/Independent |
| future_dont_know | Future vote: Don't know |
| past_fianna_fail | Past vote: Fianna Fáil |
| past_fine_gael | Past vote: Fine Gael |
| past_labour | Past vote: Labour |
| past_greens | Past vote: Green Party |
| past_sinn_fein | Past vote: Sinn Féin |
| past_ind_oth | Past vote: Other/Independent |
| past_dont_know | Past vote: Don't know |

3 Examples and Cautionary Notes

In this section, we provide examples on how the datasets can reveal difference and similarities across sub-groups. We also show how and why these analyses can be problematic and involve considerable uncertainty. If researchers conduct sub-group analyses, we recommend pooling or comparing many surveys to better understand heterogeneity across polls.

Table 4: Variable description: Satisfaction with party leaders (Behaviour and Attitudes)

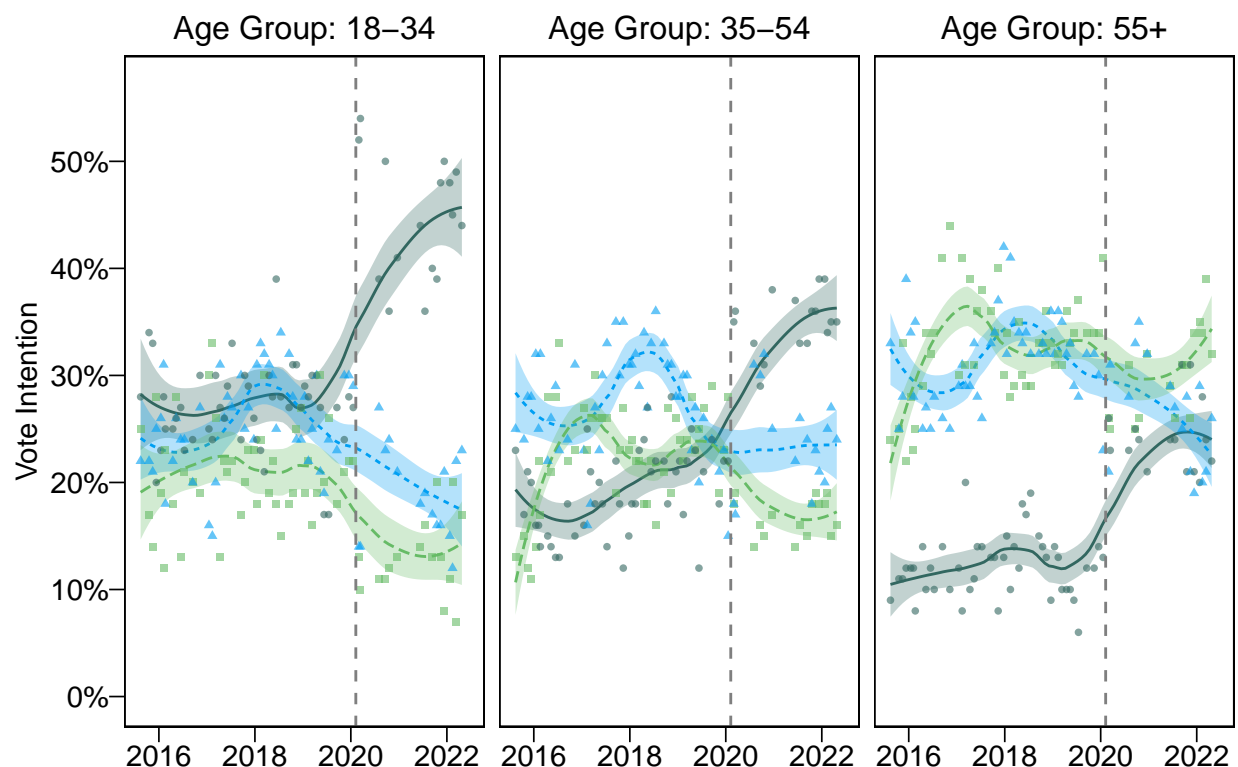
| Variable | Details |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| date | Release of poll |
| date_start | Survey fielding: start |
| date_end | Survey fielding: end |
| date_middle | Survey fielding: middle |
| sample_size | Sample size |
| leader_party | Leader's party |
| leader_name | |
| satisfaction_leader | Satisfaction with party leader |
| total | Vote intention: All respondents |
| male | Vote intention: Male respondents |
| female | Vote intention: Female respondents |
| age_18_34 | Vote intention by age group: 18-24 |
| age_35_54 | Vote intention by age group: 35-54 |
| age_55 | Vote intention by age group: 55+ |
| class_abc1 | Social class: ABC1 |
| class_c2de | Social class: C2DE |
| class_f | Social class: F |
| region_dublin | Region: Dublin |
| region_leinster | Region: Rest of Leinster |
| region_munster | Region: Munster |
| region_connacht_ulster | Region: Connacht/Ulster |
| area_urban | Urban region |
| area_rural | Rural region |
| const_seats_3 | 3-seat constituency |
| const_seats_4 | 4-seat constituency |
| const_seats_5 | 5-seat constituency |
| voting_vote | Voting: will definitely vote |
| voting_prob_vote | Voting: will probably vote |
| voting_undecided | Voting: undecided |
| voting_not_vote | Voting: will not vote |
| future_fianna_fail | Future vote: Fianna Fáil |
| future_fine_gael | Future vote: Fine Gael |
| future_labour | Future vote: Labour |
| future_greens | Future vote: Green Party |
| future_sinn_fein | Future vote: Sinn Féin |
| future_ind_oth | Future vote: Other/Independent |
| future_dont_know | Future vote: Don't know |
| past_fianna_fail | Past vote: Fianna Fáil |
| past_fine_gael | Past vote: Fine Gael |
| past_labour | Past vote: Labour |
| past_greens | Past vote: Green Party |
| past_sinn_fein | Past vote: Sinn Féin |
| past_ind_oth | Past vote: Other/Independent |
| past_dont_know | Past vote: Don't know |

3.1 First-Preference Vote Choice

First, we show how first-preference vote choice for Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Sinn Féin has developed across the three age categories. The plot reveals three striking developments. First, in the group of 18-34-olds, support for the three parties was comparable between 2016 and 2020. Since the election in February 2020, support for Sinn Féin has skyrocketed among this age group. Support increased from around 30% to 45-50%. In the age group of 35-54 year-olds Sinn Féin also overtook Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. In the group of respondents

over 55 years, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael tend to be stronger than Sinn Féin, but this gap has narrowed considerably. Current support for Sinn Féin is almost twice as high than between 2016 and 2020.

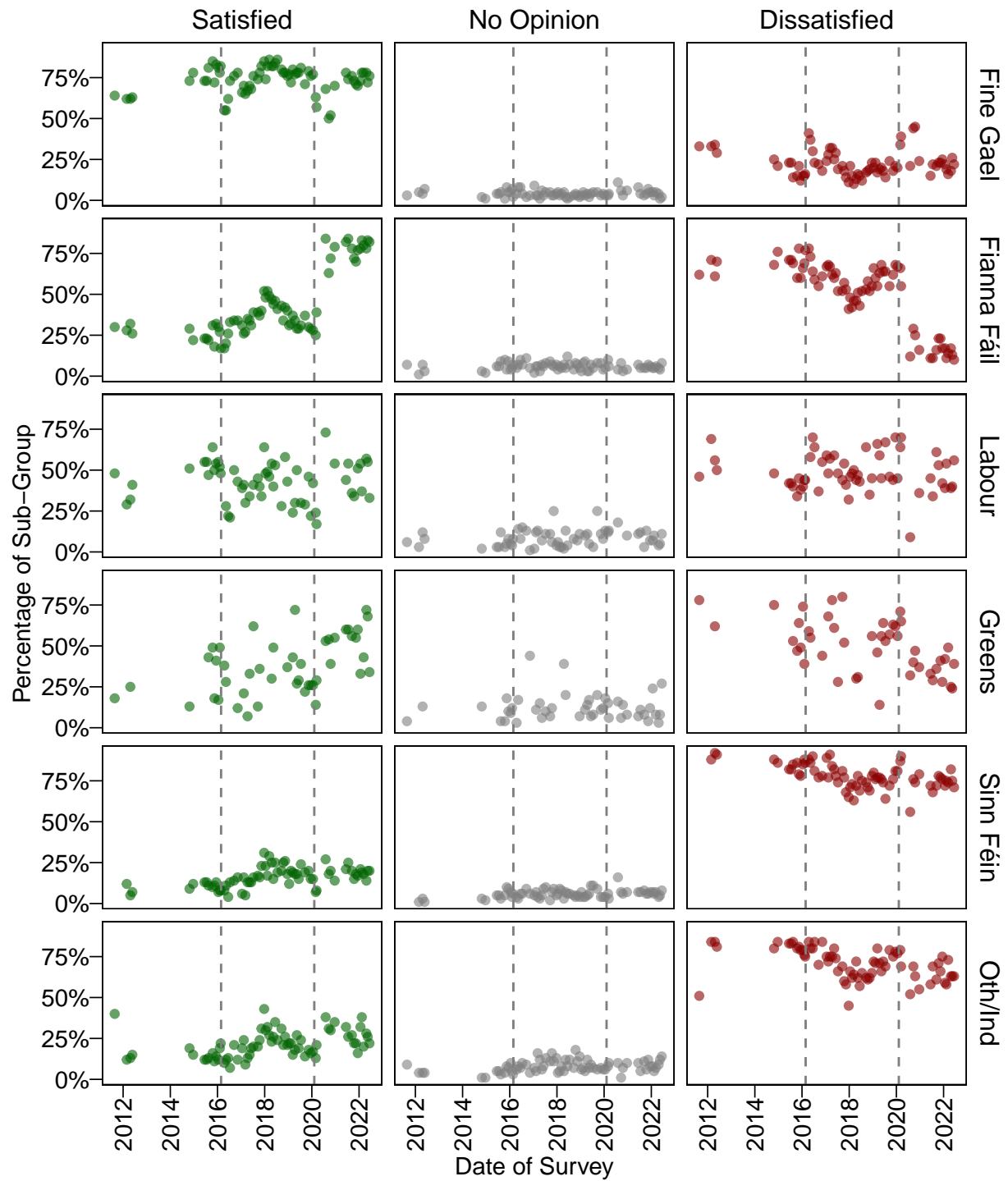
Party Support Among Age Groups in Behaviour and Attitudes Polls



3.2 Satisfaction with Government

Next, we turn to an example of government satisfaction. Behaviour and Attitude polls ask respondents whether they are satisfied with the government, dissatisfied with the government, or have no opinion. These results are, among others, available for subgroups of vote intention. The figure below shows, unsurprisingly, that Fianna Fáil supporters were much more satisfied when the party joined a coalition with Fine Gael and the Green Party in June 2020. We also observe that over 8 out of 10 Sinn Féin supporters tend to be dissatisfied with the government. Results for the Green Party and Labour vary a lot, which is a consequence of the small subsample size.

Satisfaction with the Government, Conditional on Party Support

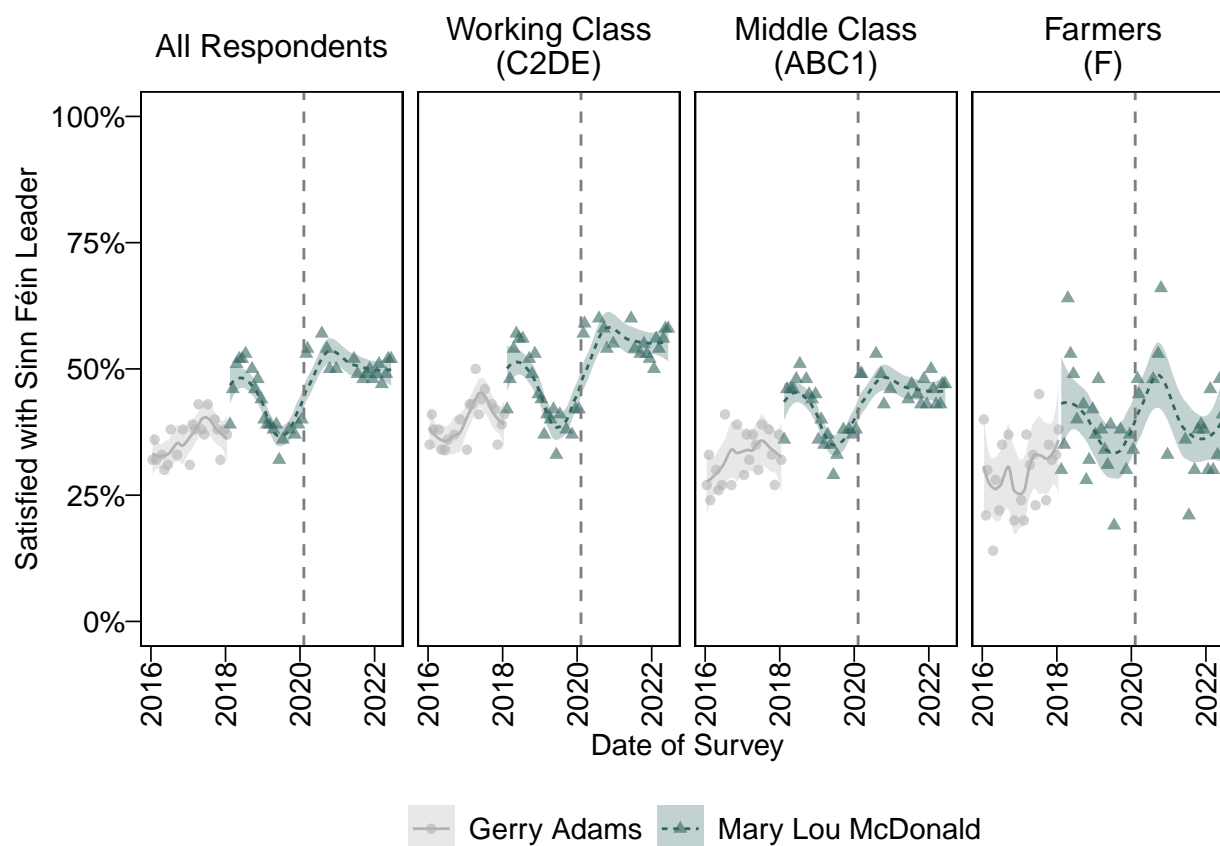


3.3 Satisfaction with Party Leaders

Third, we assess how approval with party leaders varies among census-based measures of social class. The B&A reports distinguish between *ABC1* (“middle class”), C2DE (“working class”) and F (farmers). All B&A datasets include estimates for these three groups. Below, we assess how support for the leader of Sinn Féin varies across the three groups. Moreover, we compare differences in approval between Mary Lou McDonald and Gerry Adams.

First, Mary Lou McDonald is more popular than Gerry Adams when he left the party. Second, voters classified into C2DE (working class) tend approve McDonald more than farmers and middle-class voters. This difference tends to be relatively small, though. Third, even though support for Sinn Féin increased substantively since the election in 2020, support McDonald remained constant. Fourth, we observe considerable variation among farmers, which again points to the disadvantage of samples with around 1000 respondents: sub-group analyses for small groups involve a lot of uncertainty and should be treated with great caution.

Satisfaction with Leaders of Sinn Féin, Conditional on Social Class



4 File Formats

We provide all datasets in four file formats.

- **csv**: The [comma-separated values](#) file ensures inter-operability as it can be opened in R, Python, Stata, SPSS, and Excel.
- **xlsx**: The [Excel spreadsheets](#) allow for an even more straightforward import of the data into Microsoft Excel.
- **dta**: This file can be used to import the datasets with correct variable encodings into [Stata](#).
- **rds**: The RDS file is optimised for the [R](#) statistical programming language.