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NEWS RELEASE

New factors at play in third party surge in 2007 Quebec election

Montreal – In 2007, Quebecers elected a minority government for the first time in more than a century, and Mario Dumont’s Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ) became the official opposition in the National Assembly, relegating the Parti québécois (PQ) to third-party position. The dramatic rise in popularity of the ADQ and third parties in general in the 2007 election is evidence of three new party constituencies that have emerged in the Quebec electorate, according to a study released by the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

The study, “La montée des tiers partis au Québec à l’élection de 2007: conjoncture ou tendance?” by Éric Bélanger (McGill University) and Richard Nadeau (Université de Montréal), probes the results and implications of the last provincial election, and examines why so many voters broke away from the province’s two traditional parties, the Quebec Liberal Party and the PQ. The ADQ’s position on reasonable accommodation and the personality of leader Mario Dumont attracted disillusioned voters from both traditional parties, but principally from the Liberals, who were receiving mixed reviews at the time. Using data from a survey of over 2,000 voters immediately following the 2007 election, the authors provide an in-depth review of the profile and motivation of Quebec voters.

“These results raise issues about party preferences and the evolution of party support in this province,” says Bélanger. “Now we understand more about how voters who supported the various parties differ from each other based on a whole host of factors, including income, education level, religion and age.”

In their exhaustive portrait of the supporters of the five main political parties, the authors found that Quebec greens, disappointed with traditional parties, chose to vote for the Green Party rather than support the traditional party that was most open to the environment. Support for Québec solidaire is based on other factors. This party found favour within the left wing of the PQ and is made up of voters who are a little less sovereigntist and a little more progressive than the average *péquist*e.

“La montée des tiers partis au Québec à l’élection de 2007: conjoncture ou tendance?” by Éric Bélanger and Richard Nadeau can be downloaded free of charge from www.irpp.org.

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