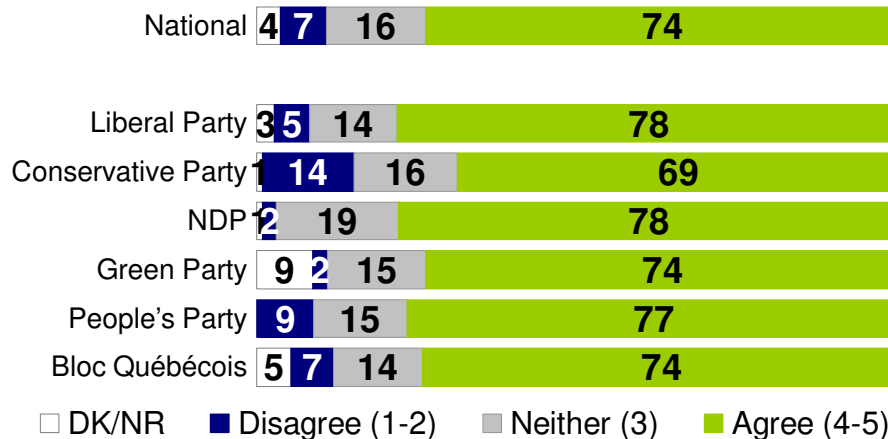# LITTLE CHEER FOR SCHEER AS CONSERVATIVES PONDER THE NEXT LEADER

[Ottawa – December 17, 2019] Clearly, the Canadian electorate isn't in a forgiving mood. No matter how they voted in October, overwhelming majorities are happy to see Andrew Scheer exiting the Conservative leader's office. A scant seven per cent are sorry to him leave, while more than ten times that figure approve of his decision.

Support for Scheer's resignation

Q. *As you may have heard, Andrew Scheer recently announced that he will be stepping down as leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. All things considered, would you say you agree or disagree with his decision to resign?*
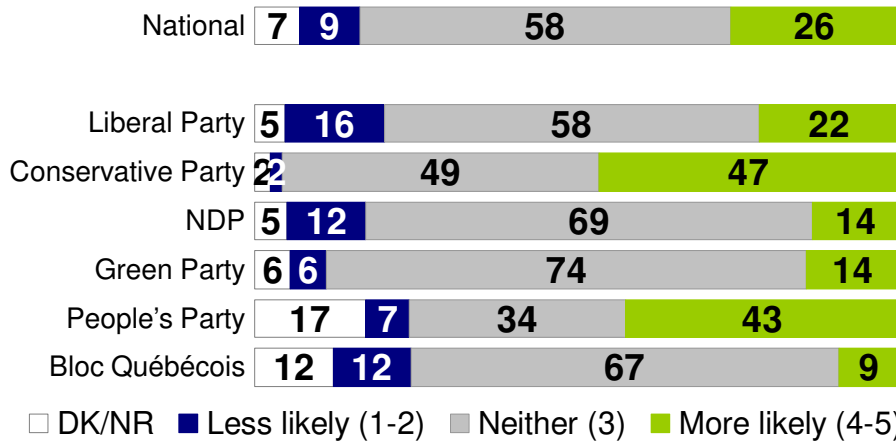
	DK/NR	Disagree (1-2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4-5)
National	4	7	16	74
Liberal Party	3	5	14	78
Conservative Party	1	14	16	69
NDP	1	2	19	78
Green Party	9	2	15	74
People's Party		9	15	77
Bloc Québécois	5	7	14	74

☐ DK/NR   ■ Disagree (1-2)   ▨ Neither (3)   ■ Agree (4-5)

BASE: *Canadians; December 12-17, 2019, n=1,543, MOE +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20*

Small-c conservatives believe that Andrew Scheer's resignation will improve the party's prospects; however, in the rest of the political spectrum, there's nothing to suggest his departure will improve the party's chances of winning.

Impact of Scheer's resignation

Q. *Would you say you would be more or less likely to vote for the Conservative Party of Canada in the next federal election now that Andrew Scheer has announced his intention to resign as leader?*
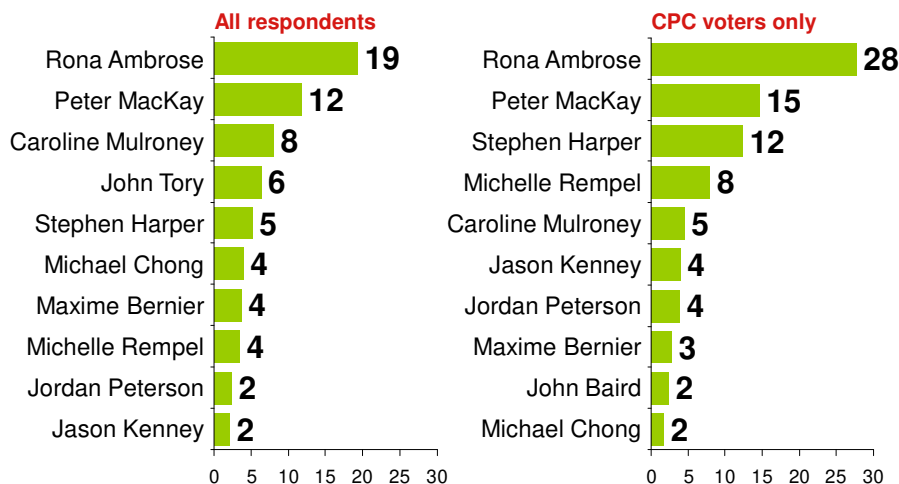
	DK/NR	Less likely (1-2)	Neither (3)	More likely (4-5)
National	7	9	58	26
Liberal Party	5	16	58	22
Conservative Party	2	2	49	47
NDP	5	12	69	14
Green Party	6	6	74	14
People's Party	17	7	34	43
Bloc Québécois	12	12	67	9

□ DK/NR ■ Less likely (1-2) ■ Neither (3) ■ More likely (4-5)

First choice for party leader (top 10 only)

Q. *If you had to choose one of these individuals to be the next leader of the federal Conservative Party, whom would you choose?*

All respondents

Rona Ambrose	19
Peter MacKay	12
Caroline Mulroney	8
John Tory	6
Stephen Harper	5
Michael Chong	4
Maxime Bernier	4
Michelle Rempel	4
Jordan Peterson	2
Jason Kenney	2

CPC voters only

Rona Ambrose	28
Peter MacKay	15
Stephen Harper	12
Michelle Rempel	8
Caroline Mulroney	5
Jason Kenney	4
Jordan Peterson	4
Maxime Bernier	3
John Baird	2
Michael Chong	2

In a test of the Conservative leadership waters, we found a few clear things and lots of murky things. First, the clear parts:

At this stage, there are only three potential candidates who have the support necessary to be considered serious contenders. Topping that list is Rona Ambrose who enjoys a clear lead with voters at 20 per cent; this figure rises to 28 per cent among Conservative supporters. Few Canadians see her as a poor choice for the leadership, though her scores in Quebec are pretty weak. She does very well with seniors and the most affluent, two key constituencies for the Conservative Party. Interestingly, her strong support with wealthier Conservatives does not spill over into strong support with university educated. Ambrose may be just the ticket that frustrated Conservative voters are seeking to regain power in the next election. Of concern to those voters is her failure to declare her intentions and nervous Liberals may be considering a much less stressful sinecure in DC as a strategy to remove this exposed risk to their fortunes.

What is not clear is the question of how well Ambrose would fare with the new ordered populists segment which constitutes the lion's share of the new Conservative constituency. They are not pining for a more moderate woman leader. This non-university, largely male group is angry, resentful of elites, anti-globalist, not impressed with science or professionals, and fatigued with 'identity' politics. It is not clear how they would respond but their contempt for Justin Trudeau might make them more accepting of this shift in leadership. They certainly are highly supportive of a change.

Peter MacKay is a solid second choice and is seen as a solid successor to Scheer. He has no obvious exposed flanks, although he does not appear to be producing broad excitement.

Stephen Harper, meanwhile, is an interesting choice and carries a completely different inventory of pluses and minuses. First, he has a very high 'terrible' score. However, he does well with Conservatives and, notably, he does extremely well with the ordered populist segment of the party. Furthermore, People's Party supporters like him, meaning that the flight risk to the People's Party would be minimized under Harper. He does very well with men, poorly educated, and in the Prairies.

It is notable that of these three choices, none has declared an intention to run.

Moving to the middle of the pack, two women – Michelle Rempel and Caroline Mulroney – score quite well. Mulroney does well in Quebec and not bad in Ontario. Rempel, in contrast, does very well in the West but has no traction in Quebec, which may render her a questionable candidate.
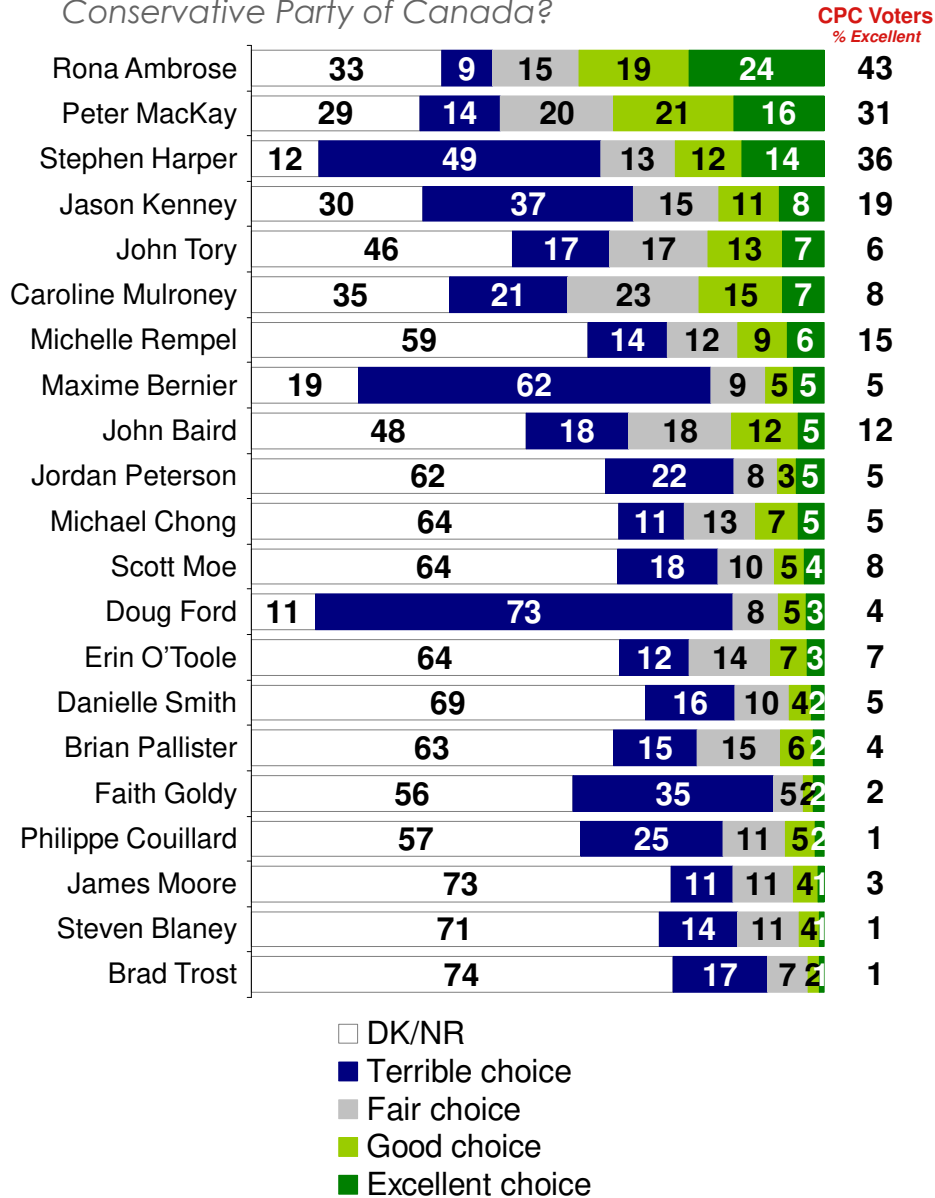
Jason Kenney, who is apparently not interested in running, will avoid the disappointment of finding out he has little resonance with Conservative voters.

Surprisingly, Jordan Peterson, whom most voters don't recognize, has a significant fan base among younger voters and scores really well with People's Party voters, who think he would be an excellent choice. Peterson really stakes out the ordered side and these marks are surprisingly strong for someone who is not currently a politician.

The top ten list is rounded off with Maxime Bernier, John Baird, and Michael Chong, none of whom can be considered strong contenders.

Views on potential CPC leaders

Q. *Do you believe each of the following individuals would make a terrible choice, a fair choice, a good choice, or an excellent choice for leader of the Conservative Party of Canada?*

CPC Voters
% Excellent

Name	DK/NR	Terrible choice	Fair choice	Good choice	Excellent choice	% Excellent
Rona Ambrose	33	9	15	19	24	43
Peter MacKay	29	14	20	21	16	31
Stephen Harper	12	49	13	12	14	36
Jason Kenney	30	37	15	11	8	19
John Tory	46	17	17	13	7	6
Caroline Mulroney	35	21	23	15	7	8
Michelle Rempel	59	14	12	9	6	15
Maxime Bernier	19	62	9	5	5	5
John Baird	48	18	18	12	5	12
Jordan Peterson	62	22	8	3	5	5
Michael Chong	64	11	13	7	5	5
Scott Moe	64	18	10	5	4	8
Doug Ford	11	73	8	5	3	4
Erin O'Toole	64	12	14	7	3	7
Danielle Smith	69	16	10	4	2	5
Brian Pallister	63	15	15	6	2	4
Faith Goldy	56	35	5	2	2	2
Philippe Couillard	57	25	11	5	2	1
James Moore	73	11	11	4	1	3
Steven Blaney	71	14	11	4	1	1
Brad Trost	74	17	7	2	1	1

☐ DK/NR
■ Terrible choice
■ Fair choice
■ Good choice
■ Excellent choice

BASE: *Canadians; December 12-17, 2019, n=1,543, MOE +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20*

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Looking at the list of those rated as terrible versus excellent choices, the clear winners of the 'terrible' sweepstakes are Doug Ford (73 per cent of Canadians rate him as a 'terrible' choice),

Maxime Bernier (62 per cent), and Stephen Harper (49 per cent). In the case of Ford, there is next to no interest as having him as the leader of the Conservative Party.

If we were to do this test again, we would drop all the obvious non-contenders. We would, however, add two candidates who were not included in this test; Pierre Poilievre has seven write-in votes, while Bernard Lord had six. Trailing in the write-in category were Justin Trudeau, Cookie Monster, and Hitler, whom we will not be including in future polls.

Methodology:

This survey was conducted using EKOS' unique, hybrid online/telephone research panel, Probit. Our panel offers exhaustive coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling and are confirmed by live interviewers. Unlike opt-in online panels, Probit supports margin of error estimates. We believe this to be the only probability-based online panel in Canada

While panellists are randomly recruited, this survey was conducted online only, meaning that it excludes the roughly one in six Canadians who either can not or will not respond to surveys online. Results should therefore be considered representative of Canada's online population. The field dates for this survey are December 12-17, 2019. In total, a random sample of 1,543 Canadian adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted by age, gender, and region to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.