



IntelligenSEER[®]

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THE FUTURE OF MONEY AND WORK



Introduction

Is America in 2020 eerily similar to Germany of the 1920s? Is it appropriate to call the analogy Weimar America? With trillions of dollars [printed in just days](#), 40+ million Americans out of work, and left and right-wing militias running amok fanning the flames of what were originally peaceful protests. Also, the battle for historical narratives coalesces with a new and most intense wave of attacks on statues of historical figures. The only thing missing is a Reichstag fire. However, we've already witnessed the burning of Minneapolis.

But does this all have to be bad news? Isn't our world made up of complementary opposing forces? The sun always rising and setting without fail, ups followed by downs, and threats turned into opportunities? Various sects of Eastern philosophies (including some martial art schools) teach that a harmful force coming your way can be channeled to your advantage. The same can be said for social, political, and economic threats. We briefly outline these below.

As in our previous edition of the Main St. – K St. IntelligenSEER **powered by Zogby Strategies and EMI Research Solutions**, we reference our recent nationwide online poll of 1,001 likely American voters (+/- 3.2 percentage points). While the data is entirely from Americans, much of what is playing out is on a global scale. Those from all over the globe can benefit from our second edition of the Main St. – K St. IntelligenSEER.

America's Many Divides

These are, but not limited to:

- Politically, the nation has entered a volatile period where a small percentage of **those on the left and right with extreme ideologies are fanning flames that could continue to spiral out of control**. We see this in the rise of groups like Antifa and Redneck Revolt, as well as on the opposing side – far-right fringe groups.
- Economically, there is an increasing gulf for those who work and those who don't, as well as between members of the elite and the non-elite (sometimes referred to as the 1% and 99%, **but in all actuality the .01% and the 99.9%**).
- Generationally, there is the most obvious divide between Baby Boomers and Millennials (or those in their 60's and 70's and those in the mid-'20s and '30s). Baby boomers are either retired, contemplating the idea if they have the wealth, looking for supplemental income, or desiring to mentor a generation facing an entirely different crisis than what Boomers faced in the '60s, '70s and after '08. Many millennials, on the other hand, are just starting families and have to plan and navigate through what increasingly looks to be epic times. Others are primarily focused and struggling with how to ground themselves financially and attain stability. A clash between generations could now be at hand.

Again, does all of this have to be bad news? The key is not to be a deer caught in headlights. A look at the data and trends with clear cut analysis and forecasts always helps to shine a light on what is to come.

On the Data Front

Whether in good times or bad times, money and work are necessities that allow everyone to enjoy what matters in life – family, hobbies. We will focus on the future of money and work according to what we asked the public and what they told us.

- **The Future of Money According to the Data**
 - With more nations [ushering in the cashless society](#), national paper currencies are increasingly called into question. Not only has this been a hot button issue for leaders of central banks and ministers/secretaries of finance and treasuries the world over, but now a good deal of the American public is behind the burgeoning policy in light of the belief that cash is ridden with microbes. **Our poll revealed that, overall, 45% of Americans agree that *paper currency...will become obsolete*. On the other hand, 40% disagree. Looking at age, those ages 18-29 and 30-44 have majorities that agree paper currency will no longer be in circulation. Not surprisingly, among those ages 65+, 63% disagree as they know a life of mostly cash and have been the most frequent users of it.**
 - Among those who agree that cash poses a threat because it carries microbes like COVID-19, we followed up with the question, *which form of currency should replace paper?* A plurality of 42% prefers a Nationally digitized currency. Next, 8% want

blockchain technology such as Bitcoin in wide use. Another 7% prefer gold and silver bullion coins. Another 3% want another form, and finally, 40% still are not sure.

- **Forecast** – The WHO now states [they did not claim cash carried COVID-19](#). Still, there is the other widely popular argument among elite – banning cash will help eradicate criminals like drug and human traffickers and terrorists. The fallacy with this argument is that the same logic was asserted to implement prohibition and the war on drugs. Neither succeeded. Criminals will always find a way to conduct their business. The quest to ban cash will have disastrous effects for the working poor and working-class who rely on under the table wages (i.e., antique dealers, waiters, bartenders, anyone who earns tips, and more). Cutting to the point, the main reason for the cashless society remains that governments all over the globe are strapped for cash and need to attain a new source of revenue. Once cash is banned, and a new digitized system is put in place, more and more countries will be able to impose negative interest rates. This means instead of the bank paying you to hold money in an account; the bank will charge you to hold money in an account. The logic here is to disincentivize savings and encourage spending as a form of stimulus. The worst-case scenario as witnessed in China, is the rollout of a social credit system in which citizens are [punished and rewarded](#).

- **Is US Debt Unsustainable and What Will Become of the Average Standard of Living?**

- Overall, 61% of the likely voters agree that the *US national debt is unsustainable and that the average living standard will be drastically reduced in the years to come*. All ideologies from Progressives to those Very Conservative have majorities that agree with the above statement ranging from high-50's to mid-60's percentage-wise. On the flip side, 20% disagree.
 - **Forecast** – In modern history, regimes often have a [lifespan of approximately 70 years](#), give or take a decade - Soviet Russia, Modern Unified Germany, Jeffersonian Democracy. Add to that list Postwar America. What can no doubt characterize the overriding philosophy of the world since 1945 that dominated Postwar America and the world is Keynesian economics (and all of its subcategories). At the core, the philosophy has favored lowering interest rates to stimulate the economy. Eventually, the fate of every nation that uses inflation and low-interest-rate policies as a panacea is ultimately currency destruction. While proponents of Modern Monetary Theory contend that deficits do not matter and that the Fed can print away deficits and the national debt, millennia of organized society show time and again that currency debasement ultimately leads to a currency crisis. Consider also that [every past world reserve currency has ultimately lost its status](#), according to JP Morgan's Marko Kolanovic. This includes former empires like the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and English. Why should the U.S. be any different?

- **The Future of Work According to the Data**-- As service and manufacturing jobs become increasingly dominated by AI/Robotics – what will become of Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X?
 - We asked the public how likely they thought their current job or previous job will be replaced by AI or robotics. **Overall**, 9% say very likely, 22% say somewhat likely, and 54% say not likely at all. When combining very and somewhat (31%), and applying that to the actual population, we're talking millions of workers fear job loss due to the inevitable introduction of AI/Robotics.
 - **Updated Forecast** – In our [previous IntelligenSEER](#), we asked the public whether they thought AI and Robotics powered by 5G was a leap forward for human civilization or a threat to humanity. A little over one-third (34%) say a leap forward vs. 41% that tells us a threat to humanity. Numbers this divided over such an intense issue point to a chasm in the future world where one side of humans will engage and or possibly [merge with today's cutting edge technology](#), as discussed in the linked video created by the World Economic Forum. There will be those that reject the so-called fourth Industrial Revolution and in greater numbers, pursue artisanship, craftsmanship, technical trades, and regenerative agriculture. Is there a possibility of a convergence between the two? As of now, it appears that the intensity within each side is too high.

- **Future Coveted Assets** – What assets are on the minds of Americans? Regarding this question, is there any wisdom from the crowd?
 - We asked *which of the following assets would you like to own most at present and into the future?* Overall, 28% favored land/real estate, as well as another 28% opting for cash. Interestingly, 16% report gold and silver coins, just 7% choose stocks, 5% say cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, 2% go with bonds, leaving 13% not sure. The key here is that 72% of the public wants to hold onto hard assets (cash, land/real estate/gold and silver coins). This reflects a deep psychological shift away from financial instruments ultimately in the hands of Wall St., and a preference for direct ownership of assets, some of which historically hold considerable value. In the case of land, one can use it as a haven in a variety of ways.
 - **Forecast** – This is not a temporary shift in psychology. While 40+ million Americans are out of work and the stock market swings violently up and down, more Americans will continue to seek stability in their lives. While there are no risk-free assets, Americans want the closest thing to it.

Trend Update

Our [previous edition](#) on June 1st went into detail on these two very crucial trends. Here are the updates.

- **Journalism update.** Top-down/non-transparent/two-dimensional Mainstream media vs. the bottom-up/transparent/multidimensional podcast revolution.
 - As outlined by Sagaar Enjeti of the Hill Rising, correspondents for network news receive daily memos outlining the recommended [talking points of the day](#). Those who do not toe the line do not rise up the ladder. Often, Television reports are heavy on the visual and sound effects yet lacks substance for in-depth narrative and rarely accurately portray alternative viewpoints. A report will often only represent one side of the opinion and be presented more in the style of activism and less like journalism. In other words, viewers and listeners are getting opinions force-fed to them. The podcast medium, however, often allows for the potential to go in-depth to the point where the host and guest's entire world view is exposed, questioned, dissected, and presented honestly and not edited down to sound bites that misrepresent. Generally speaking, baby boomers have mostly known the top-down, highly controlled narratives that come from mainstream media. In contrast, Millennials grew up in the wild west of the internet and are generally more comfortable exploring what is typically considered taboo on network TV.
 - **Forecast** – While Baby Boomers today still hold much of the world's influential positions, eventually, they will witness the inevitable transition to a world increasingly run by Millennials. The oldest Millennials are approaching age 40 and positions of leadership are just around the corner. Today's world of leadership built by Boomers will continue to erode at increasing speed and the mounting problems will require an abandonment of the status quo. Millennials will have to fixate less on bankrupt ideologies and rediscover what works – an emphasis on age-old virtues like character, merit, and wisdom. Yesterday's virtues extolled by higher education and the mainstream media have become today's vices. More specifically, the constant hyper-focus on race and gender will only continue to balkanize society. If one is to truly value diversity, it needs to go beyond physical features and focus more on heart and soul – which all humans have. And most importantly, let the debates roll.
- **Martial law update** -- There is little reason to believe the amount of rage that spilled over the last couple of weeks will burn itself out in a matter of a few weeks. As outlined in the introduction, there are real stark parallels between Weimar Germany and what is going on in the United States today. While we aren't experiencing hyperinflation, the US economy is approaching Great Depression levels. In all actuality, a case can be made we're already beyond the Great Depression. Consider that today more are out of work,

few have any savings, and more are in debt than any time in the history of the world when factoring in mortgages, automobile loans, higher education loans, and credit card debt). [Food insecurity and job insecurity](#) are problems that won't be fixed in the long-run by more stimulus. On the political front, far-left and far-right fringe groups are lurking in the shadows.

- **Forecast** -- In typical Hegelian fashion (the German philosopher Hegel), the dialect at play is problem, reaction, solution. The problem equals the protests that turned violent because of agitators. The reaction will be the response from the extreme right. As these two eventually duke it out on the streets in various cities - as we have already witnessed in the last few years - the situation is likely to spiral out of control. The result is likely to be the U.S. military patrolling the streets of major cities. The one good case for why U.S Military patrolling the streets won't happen is that we have witnessed the Pentagon's refusal to follow Trump's call to send the military into Washington D.C. However, will that hold up as the summer intensifies, the economy continues to decline, all as we get closer to the November election?

A brief note on the riots and the increasing lawlessness:

Two basic views explain the recent wave of riots all across the nation (and world). One sees an organic movement built on rage over decades of police abuse, systemic corruption, and institutional racism towards minorities. Another points to outside agitators using coordinated violence. Regardless of which side you agree with, either way, the endgame is dangerous. Consequently, Americans in droves are [fleeing big cities](#) as they see the writing on the wall. Major metro areas no longer provide the life they once did as violence, homelessness, and disorder are on the rise.

In the Final Analysis

We already asked if America in 2020 is eerily similar to Weimar Germany in the 1920s? Historical analogies are never perfect, but they give us some grounding to make sense of what is happening. This state of crisis can be best understood by the economy facing destruction and thus tearing apart the social fabric. On June 11th, there was a 7% drop in the Dow Jones. Secretary of Treasury Mnuchin is calling for another trillion-dollar stimulus package. Currently, racism takes center stage in the mainstream media as the single most important issue of the day. In reality, an economy spiraling out of control, largely due to decades of reckless inflationary policy, is the unseen but omnipresent force behind what is ripping apart the social fabric and adding to the building pressure. Eventually, havoc wreaks on the public, and opportunists emerge from the fringes of society seeking violence to capitalize on their agenda. This was Weimar Germany throughout the 1920s, and it looks to be Weimar America in the 2020s.

About Us

John Zogby Strategies

Nearly 40 years of excellence providing the most accurate polling and market research - servicing clients in over 80 countries, ranging from global NGO's, Fortune 500 companies, candidates from all parties, business startups, and local municipalities trying to redefine their strategy amidst dynamic changes. JZS asks revealing questions that get to the core and point to the future, offer meaningful analysis, and guiding strategies.

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