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# AFTER THE STATUES FALL WHAT COMES NEXT?



## Introduction

Two men stand with their backs facing each other at opposite ends of an unspecified monument as they rally their groups. Man one says to his audience, “this statue honors a man who put forth ideas that enshrined this nation and blessed every citizen within it so that, as long as he or she displays virtues, they have the opportunity for levels of achievement not possible in any other nation of the world. For this, we must respect this statue.” Man two says to his audience, “this statue embodies the horrors and evils that comprise this nation’s original sin. We will not pay homage to a symbol that upholds human suffering of the worst kind.”

Welcome to history wars, where the battle for narratives traverses the present, alters the past, with the sole goal to seize the future.

*How is this any different from any other point when previous culture wars ravaged the American landscape?*

The obvious answer is that statues of historical figures haven’t come down this fast before in our nation’s history. But there are deeper forces at play beyond the obvious.

America is now growing old as it enters its 4<sup>th</sup> major crisis (1790, 1860, 1929, and 2020). Baby boomers, the first real teenagers, and America, in terms of her age, both experienced their adolescence together. As boomers grey, America’s post-war order decays; we, therefore, enter a new age. One of the critical questions that could follow is, ***will this new era result in the change of the national borders we have come to assume as fixed?***

One only needs to look at the history of European maps. Take any given century over the last millennia. European borders (as anywhere else) have been continuously in flux. That is one constant theme throughout history; boundaries are always in flux. Are we really to believe that the map of continental America will remain as it has for the last 100 plus years? Why would the “law of shifting boundaries” (I just coined that) not apply to the United States?

This is precisely why it is different this time. Call it geographic realism and entropy.

But what comes next after the statues fall? Will America remain united with a cultural divide so thick that it can cut a monument? Can 50 states remain united in perpetuity with the division this intense and has no clear end in sight?

The 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the Main St. – K St. IntelligenSEER, powered by **Zogby Strategies & EMI Research Solutions**, has asked the questions of the ages in our most recent poll of 1,000 likely voters, conducted on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Here is a glimpse of what comes next after the statues fall.

## Trust in Which Level of Government & Controversy in the Upcoming November Election

*Which Level of Government do you Trust the Most?*

|                | Local | State | National   | None of These | Not Sure |
|----------------|-------|-------|------------|---------------|----------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 25%   | 28%   | <b>14%</b> | 20%           | 14%      |
| East           | 22%   | 38%   | 16%        | 12%           | 13%      |
| South          | 23%   | 26%   | 12%        | 25%           | 15%      |
| Central/GrtLks | 27%   | 23%   | 14%        | 19%           | 17%      |
| West           | 28%   | 26%   | 16%        | 22%           | 9%       |
| Democrat       | 26%   | 39%   | 8%         | 17%           | 10%      |
| Republican     | 19%   | 27%   | 22%        | 15%           | 17%      |
| Independent    | 30%   | 15%   | 13%        | 30%           | 13%      |

How one votes and which region they reside in are probably the two demographics most relevant to the question above. The breakdown of both region and party identification are revealing and speak volumes. The breakdown of likely voters overall is somewhat consistent with region and party ID, displaying substantial division over which level of government to trust most.

In our [previous issue](#) of the IntelligenSEER, we reported that overall 48% of likely voters told us *we should trust our national leaders less*. That number still presently holds as we asked the same question in our most recent poll on July 8th. Compounding that low level of trust in our national leaders, we found in this new poll that only **14% trust national government the most**.

*How Likely Are You to Believe that the November 2020 Election for President will Have Controversy Including Any of the Following – Voter Fraud, Voter Suppression, Foreign Involvement, or Recount Issues?*

|                | Very Likely | Somewhat Likely | Not Likely At All | Not Sure |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 51%         | 33%             | 7%                | 8%       |
| Progressive    | <b>65%</b>  | 20%             | 4%                | 10%      |
| Liberal        | 49%         | 39%             | 6%                | 6%       |
| Moderate       | 46%         | 36%             | 8%                | 10%      |
| Conservative   | 45%         | 40%             | 9%                | 6%       |
| Very Conserv.  | <b>69%</b>  | 22%             | 4%                | 5%       |

The lack of trust in national politics is so deep on all sides. Overall, a slight majority anticipate that it is *very likely* there will be some form of controversy in the 2020 November election results. All ideologies hover near the 50% territory regarding the choice *very likely*. When combining *very likely* and *somewhat likely* – a range from 82% to 91% believe that there is the likelihood in general for a controversial event. That is genuine distrust.

**Forecast:** The disputed elections of 2000 and 2016 act as a guide to what happens when a nation is deeply divided. Looking at today, we have sufficient reason to believe - given the division on all fronts including cultural, economic, informational, political, and racial – come election day or just before, the political drama that has been playing out should reach a new high point. In 2000, Americans didn’t know who their next president would be. In 2016 and up until today, nearly half of the country has still not come to terms with the reality that Trump won the presidency. Given the lack of trust in the national government from all sides as well as the expectation that this election will be controversial as our data shows, lots of Americans will simply not accept it if their guy doesn’t win. This would be a lose-lose situation and a devastating blow to the little confidence that remains in politics at the national level.

**On Secession**

2016 changed the conversation on this taboo topic. Before the election of Trump, for most people it was in the realm of extremist ideology. Watch this [clip](#) of Gwyneth Paltrow playing a California politician. It is fascinating that such a passionate overture to secession made the cut on Netflix. It must be an increasingly popular view, at least in large pockets of California. Or is it just large pockets of California? Consider the following table.

*In 5 to 10 Years Do you Expect that all 50 States will **Remain** United Under the Constitution or that One or More States will **Secede**?*

|                | <b>Remain</b> | <b>Secede</b> | <b>Not Sure</b> |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 56%           | 24%           | 20%             |
| East           | 60%           | 22%           | 18%             |
| South          | 50%           | 28%           | 22%             |
| Central/GrtLks | 58%           | 21%           | 21%             |
| West           | 56%           | 26%           | 18%             |

In other words, a little over one-half of likely voters believe all 50 states will remain united under the Constitution five to ten years from now. In contrast, roughly one-quarter believe **at least one state will secede from the union during the 2020s**. While this question deals with expectations, the next question deals with sentiment. Many might find the data shocking.

*Which of the Following Statements Comes Closest to your View?*

**Statement A:** States Seceding from the Union is **Illegal**, and Any Attempt to Should be Put Down by Military Intervention.

**Statement B:** States Have a **Legal** Right to Declare Independence from the Federal Government and Should Not Have to Face any Military Intervention.

|                | Illegal | Legal      | Not Sure |
|----------------|---------|------------|----------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 39%     | 36%        | 25%      |
| Democrat       | 32%     | <b>43%</b> | 26%      |
| Republican     | 46%     | 36%        | 18%      |
| Independent    | 40%     | 29%        | 31%      |
| 18 – 29 y/o    | 33%     | <b>52%</b> | 15%      |
| 30 – 49 y/o    | 37%     | <b>40%</b> | 23%      |
| 50 – 64 y/o    | 39%     | 33%        | 28%      |
| 65 +           | 47%     | 23%        | 31%      |
| East           | 43%     | 33%        | 24%      |
| South          | 34%     | <b>39%</b> | 27%      |
| Central/GrtLks | 43%     | 30%        | 27%      |
| West           | 35%     | <b>44%</b> | 20%      |

While it may come as no surprise that a plurality of likely Southern voters hold their share of secessionist sentiment, as well as a plurality in Western states (see [Sagebrush Rebellion](#)), it may come as a surprise to many that those under the age of 50 generally hold secessionist sentiment.

One could say that Trump mostly drives this. But by doing so would ignore what is woven into the history of a nation that was founded on declaring independence and fought a war seventy years later over the same matter. And while Trump may be the driving force behind this sentiment coming from Democrats and young voters – the reality is, **it's everywhere as the data shows.**

*In Light of Recent Events, do you Believe America will Eventually **Overcome** this Current Wave of Disunity or America will Eventually be Pushed Towards a **Civil War**?*

|                | Overcome | Civil War  | Not Sure |
|----------------|----------|------------|----------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 50%      | 31%        | 19%      |
| Democrat       | 51%      | 23%        | 27%      |
| Republican     | 48%      | <b>41%</b> | 12%      |
| Independent    | 53%      | 30%        | 17%      |
| 18 – 29 y/o    | 50%      | <b>38%</b> | 13%      |
| 30 – 49 y/o    | 49%      | 33%        | 19%      |
| 50 – 64 y/o    | 45%      | 31%        | 24%      |
| 65 +           | 63%      | 21%        | 15%      |
| East           | 56%      | 23%        | 21%      |
| South          | 44%      | <b>36%</b> | 20%      |
| Central/GrtLks | 49%      | 32%        | 20%      |
| West           | 55%      | 31%        | 14%      |

**Forecast:** Although most demographics listed above display near majority sentiment that we will overcome this current wave of disunity, an alarming number in every category above fear America is being pushed towards a Civil War - **including overall 31% of likely voters.**

When combining the data from the previous trends on *which level of government do you trust most* and *how likely is it that the November election for President will have controversy* along with the data tracking secessionist sentiment – it is hard not to see the great potential for a conflict brewing. While it is **highly unlikely** that one half of the country will be engaged in a full-scale war with the other half – either geographically or in terms of party identification – it is, however, entirely **within the realm of possibility** that the 50 states will not remain united under Washington D.C. a decade or more from now. The data capturing the sentiment above points to this as well as the historical reality of the ever-changing nature of borders. When taking the long view of history, our nation is still young, and even with 250 years under its belt along with three major crises, and the fourth just arriving, it is safe to say that the United States borders may not look the same after getting through this decade.

**On Statues**

We come full circle back to the issue of statues.

*Which of the Following Statements Comes Closest to yours?*

**Statement A:** *Confederate Statues and Flags are Offensive and Reveal a Darker Side of our History that We are Trying to Overcome.*

**Statement B:** *The Confederacy is a part of American History, and Despite being Offensive to Many, Erasing History is a Dangerous Tool that has been Used in Past Totalitarian Regimes and will Threaten the American Tradition of Freedom of Expression.*

|                | Statement A | Statement B | Not Sure |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall</b> | 38%         | 52%         | 11%      |
| Democrat       | <b>56%</b>  | 31%         | 13%      |
| Republican     | 15%         | <b>75%</b>  | 10%      |
| Independent    | <b>41%</b>  | <b>51%</b>  | 8%       |
| 18 – 29 y/o    | <b>44%</b>  | <b>41%</b>  | 16%      |
| 30 – 49 y/o    | <b>46%</b>  | <b>47%</b>  | 7%       |
| 50 – 64 y/o    | 31%         | 56%         | 13%      |
| 65 +           | 32%         | 60%         | 9%       |
| East           | <b>47%</b>  | <b>43%</b>  | 10%      |
| South          | <b>43%</b>  | <b>55%</b>  | 8%       |
| Central/GrtLks | 29%         | 57%         | 16%      |
| West           | 41%         | 52%         | 7%       |

Talk about history wars! While the overall breakdown displays that statement B wins the day, a deeper dive into key demographics shows an incredible split that reveals a deep divide over how Americans should deal with the controversy over statues.

**Forecast:** A nation divided over its past and succumbing to waves of extremism and violence is on a slippery slope. How can such a vast country with so much division maintain its national unity when it is intensely battling over its heart and soul, the past? Although, by and large, America has been divided since the First Continental Congress and going forward – e.g. Rural vs. Urban, Federalist vs. Anti-Federalism, North vs. South, Empire vs. Republic, Democrat vs. Republican, White vs. Non-White. 2020 adds to the mound piling on more layers of division.

To what extent the national borders will splinter is yet to be determined. However, there likely is no turning back this time as geographic reality and entropy settle in on the ever-growing mound of division. Currently, the continent of Europe is having this conversation in the form of “Brexit”, “Finished”, “Czech out”, “Oustria”, “Italeave”, “Frexit”, and beyond. Also, there is Catalonia, Scotland, Belgium, and probably more. One thing for certain is that growing sentiment for declaring independence is not going away any time soon.

## Conclusion

Imagine a future society where the only way to regain trust is through a distributed ledger platform where all of our data has been uploaded for all of society to see. It ultimately influences who wants to do business with whom. It is decentralized, meaning no one authority controls it as everyone has access to it. In this world, where our darkest secrets are there to see for all, who would have a statue erected in memory of them? On the one hand, maybe people would think twice about what they say or do. On the other hand, perhaps there will be no statues at all?

The purpose of this thought exercise is ultimately to recognize that everyone is flawed. Using today’s standards, just as statues of national heroes such as George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt are called into question, MLK and Malcolm X wouldn’t have monuments or schools named after them. An alleged [recording](#) of MLK has him laughing while recounting the memory of witnessing a rape, and we know from Malcolm X’s autobiography that he was a pimp and drug pusher. Since nearly every important historical figure has a stain of some sort on their reputation, it begs the question, is this most intense wave of statue removal really about moral character? If it is, then maybe we should all go through background checks utilizing distributed ledger technology. Who would pass the test?

**Back to the present.** Don’t forget about those who are not sure from each question analyzed above. They are a significant percentage in nearly every question. If there is to be any battle, let it be a civilized battle over winning the hearts and minds of those who are not sure. If one side can get enough of them to tip in favor of a majority, then that side has won the day with the pen (or the internet). The loser in the civilized battle over messages always has a shot in the next round. That is the point of a free society.

## 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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