

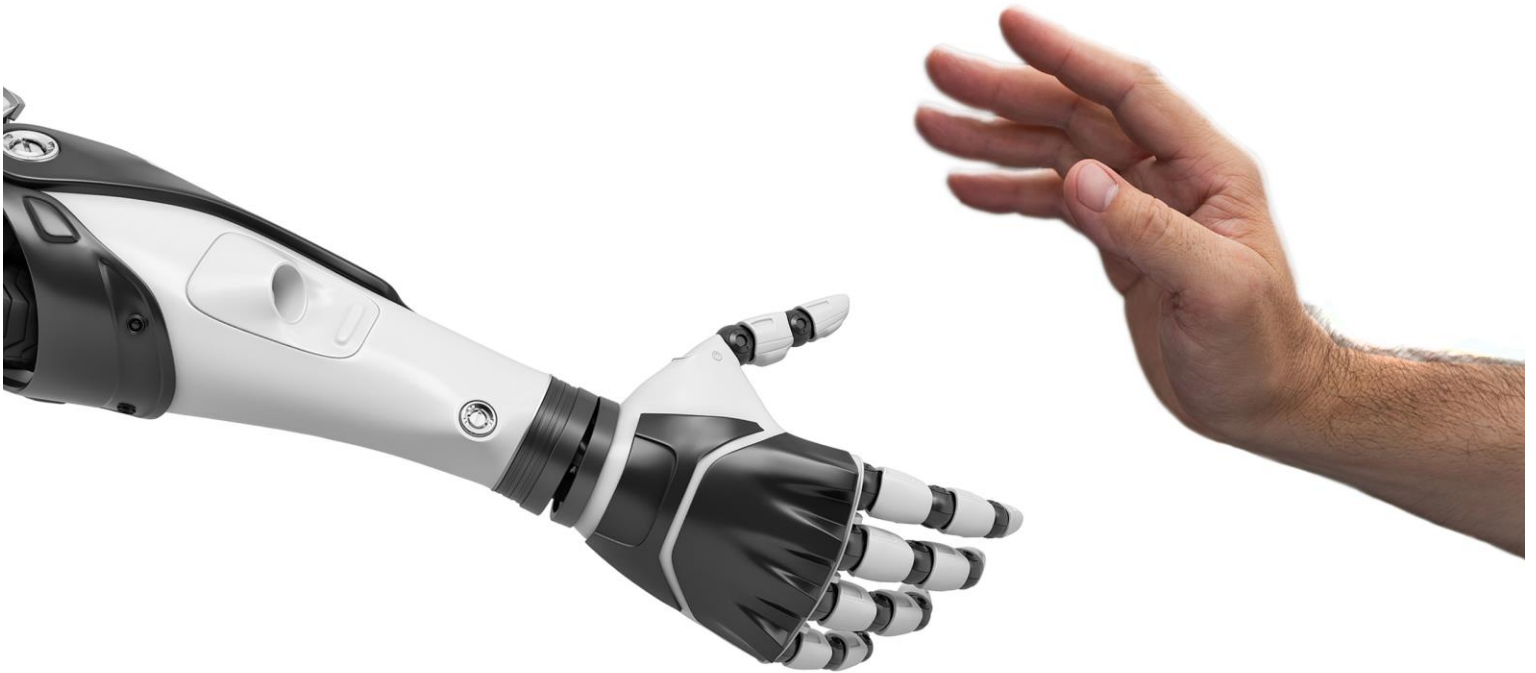


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THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



WILL YOU PARTICIPATE?

Introduction

Here's an astounding fact. If it were possible to take a person from Manhattan circa 1800 and have them travel back in time to when Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth, day-to-day life would not be all that unfamiliar to the Manhattanite.

In other words, the standard of living for the average human born into one of the many civilizations around the world had not changed all that much over the course of eighteen centuries!

However, taking that same Manhattanite and having him time travel 115 years into the future on his island would be an earth-shattering experience with electric grids, automobiles, radios, refrigerators made for the home, and much, much more.

Late in 2019, it dawned on me that, in a sense, time travel is not entirely out of reach.

I discovered this seemingly outrageous notion when I hired two Amish sisters from way down the old country road nearby to help assist around the home and garden.

While we were all living in the same calendar year, at the same time, we were living in different centuries – my wife and me, for the most part in the 21st century and the two Amish sisters a combination of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Even with the powerful lure of the first, second, and the most recent third Industrial Revolutions, the Amish (today consisting of over three hundred thousand in the U.S.) almost entirely chose not to participate.

Any Amish adult could take that same trip to the ancient world, as our hypothetical Manhattanite above, and not miss a beat.

Consequently, if you were to go into detail about the coming fourth Industrial Revolution, as outlined by the [World Economic Forum](#), they would have no idea what you're talking about and most likely would be terrified.

No doubt, the Amish are the most extreme example of off the grid living. Still, I bring them up because Zogby Strategies has the data that suggests a significant portion of the American public as of today would reject the World Economic Forum's invitation to participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

And while the people we surveyed are, of course, nothing like the Amish, the analogy presents a similar theme of a chasm, which was [previously forecast in issue 2](#) of the Main St. – K St. IntelligenSEER powered by **Zogby Strategies and EMI Research Solutions** (see section "the future of work").

So how about you? Regarding the fourth Industrial Revolution, will you participate?

The 2020s: A Decade of Prosperity or Economic Hardship?

Typically, these two questions would be asked in the style of Statement A vs. Statement B in one question. But we wanted to gauge the likelihood of each separately and compare.

We set the stage by posing two separate questions – the first focusing on economic optimism for the 2020s revealed some flashing indicators.

*How likely is it that the Global economy witnesses a decade of **prosperity** in the 2020s?*

	Very	Somewhat	V/S Comb.	Not At All	Not Sure
Overall	14%	30%	44%	36%	20%
Male	18%	36%	54%	31%	15%
Female	11%	25%	36%	41%	24%
Lost Job	21%	33%	54%	30%	16%
Didn't Lose Job	12%	29%	41%	38%	21%
18 – 29 y/o	18%	40%	58%	23%	19%
30 – 44 y/o	22%	30%	52%	34%	14%
45 – 64 y/o	11%	27%	38%	41%	21%
65 +	8%	31%	39%	39%	22%

First, regarding the likelihood of economic prosperity, in the overall breakdown above, none of the choices enter majority territory. Second, looking at women, they are considerably lower than men, by 18 percentage points, regarding their optimistic outlook for this decade. Third, those who have lost a job report more optimism than those still working. How is that? The answer is that many are currently making more income now on unemployment than they were when working. Intuitively, they know that can't last, because when following up with the question on the likelihood for the 2020s to be a decade of economic hardship, 77% of those who report having lost a job say it is likely. See the next chart.

*How likely is it that the Global economy witnesses a decade of **economic hardship** in the 2020s?*

	Very	Somewhat	V/S Comb.	Not At All	Not Sure
Overall	29%	41%	70%	15%	16%
Male	27%	41%	68%	14%	16%
Female	30%	41%	71%	11%	17%
Lost Job	37%	40%	77%	12%	12%
Didn't Lose Job	26%	41%	67%	15%	17%
18 – 29 y/o	27%	45%	72%	13%	16%
30 – 44 y/o	33%	44%	77%	11%	13%
45 – 64 y/o	31%	38%	69%	14%	17%
65 +	22%	40%	62%	21%	17%

Then we pivoted and tested the pessimistic economic outlook question and the eight-hundred-pound gorilla in the room was finally acknowledged.

The data, as usual, speaks for itself, with each demographic group listed at or near 70% territory, believing that the 2020s are likely to be a decade of economic hardship (when combining choices *somewhat* and *very*).

Forecast

As covered previously in [issue number 2](#) (see section “the future of money”), people are seeking stability and safety. Our most recent nationwide poll shows that 75% of likely American voters want to hold hard assets (up from 72% in late May). These hard assets include cash, land, and precious metals. Bonds, cryptocurrencies, and stocks make up the remaining 25%.

But what about the youth – as in those who have to start their careers this decade? We anticipate that as early as this fall, when millions of Gen Z’ers enter their first year of college, as well as those who return, it will dawn on many that overpriced online education (for those institutions that will not open) will not enhance their future. For those who will come back to campus, the experience will be terrible due to social distancing measures and the balkanizing effect of hyper-charged activism gone wild. They too will realize that these conditions will not enhance their future. But what will improve their future will be the resurgence of apprenticeships where skills can be quickly developed on the job, demand for necessary services can be met, money can be made, and drowning in debt can be avoided—a win-win for society.

On the Rollout of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Expert economists are talking about the Fourth Industrial Revolution over the next few years, which includes the rollout of AI, robotics, augmented reality, the internet of things, etc.

*Regardless of where you are in your career or lifespan, **which would you prefer?***

Statement A: *Cutting-edge technology and work of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.*

Statement B: *Back to basics and indispensable jobs such as artisanship, craftsmanship, and agriculture.*

	Cutting-Edge	Back-to-Basic	Not Sure
Overall	30%	51%	19%
Male	36%	48%	16%
Female	24%	55%	22%
White	28%	55%	18%
Hispanic	44%	39%	18%
Black	28%	50%	22%
18 – 29 y/o	41%	46%	13%
30 – 44 y/o	35%	50%	15%
45 – 64 y/o	24%	54%	22%
65 +	27%	53%	20%

Numbers like above inspired the cover image of this issue. Today, if a robot or an artificially intelligent robot were to extend its hand to the collective humanity, so many within the body that makes up the whole would create enough of a pullback to prevent a handshake.

The fact that a slight majority (51%) prefer back to the basics work supports the imagery in the cover.

While there are a few groups that opt for cutting-edge work and surpass the overall percentage of 30% - these include 18 – 29-year-olds (41%), 30 – 44-year-olds (35%), men (36%), and Hispanics (44%).

However, no demographic group above reports a majority regarding a preference for the cutting-edge work of the fourth Industrial Revolution, whereas several maintain majority support for back to basics type work listed above.

Golden Age vs. Dark Age

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

Statement A: The Fourth Industrial Revolution will usher humanity into a golden age, economically and culturally.

Statement B: The Fourth Industrial Revolution will usher humanity into a dark age, economically and culturally.

Statement C: At first, the transition will be difficult, but eventually, it will work itself out.

	Golden	Dark	Work Itself Out	Not Sure
Overall	20%	25%	34%	21%
Male	25%	27%	30%	17%
Female	15%	22%	38%	25%
White	19%	23%	38%	20%
Hispanic	25%	31%	28%	16%
Black	20%	31%	20%	29%
18 – 29 y/o	19%	34%	29%	17%
30 – 44 y/o	31%	25%	30%	15%
45 – 64 y/o	14%	28%	33%	25%
65 +	21%	10%	44%	25%

Often, we asked these values style questions with just two options (A vs. B) to gauge intensity toward one side or see if there is a stark division. In this case, we added a balancing option (statement C) that won a plurality among the overall and most demos. There is still a stark division.

Interestingly, statement A scores the lowest of all choices among the overall public and most often scores the lowest when excluding *not sure* among most demographic groups.

However, the *dark age* option won a plurality among Hispanics, Blacks, and 18 – 29-year-olds (the latter group is critical).

What’s intriguing is that the youngest age cohort scores the third-lowest percentage in selecting choice *golden age*, behind those ages 45 – 64 and women.

But most intriguing is that 18 – 29-year-olds ranked highest in their selection of choice *dark age*. This is a flashing indicator for the following reasons - they have been steeped in digital technology for most of their lives, they don’t recall a world before the internet, and even among the oldest of this group (those in their late 20s), nearly half of their lives have been inundated in smartphones, social media, gaming, online pornography, and more. They Indeed are the face of digital addiction.

The rest of the age cohorts, on the other hand, indeed include many that are also digitally addicted - but not as defining in intensity as the 18 – 29 - however, remember quite well a time when a phone was attached to the wall with a chord and when a computer wasn’t in the home.

The numbers suggest a weariness among the 18 – 29 towards an all invasive world of tech where, to quote a line out of the World Economic Forum video linked above in the Introduction, “our understanding of the human body as a natural construct will begin to change.”

On Participation

After a couple of questions that brought us to the heart of the issue, our final question above on the Fourth Industrial Revolution penetrates right to the soul of it all. Will you participate? Again, if you still haven’t viewed the video linked above, it is a must-see to grasp the totality of this report.

Regarding the Fourth Industrial Revolution, regarding AI, robotics, augmented reality, the internet of things, etc.), which of the following statements comes closer to your view?

Statement A: *I will participate in these kinds of new technologies.*

Statement B: *I will not participate in these kinds of new technologies.*

	Will Participate	Won’t Participate	Not Sure
Overall	39%	35%	26%
Male	45%	33%	22%
Female	33%	37%	30%
Democrat	47%	28%	26%
Republican	34%	42%	24%
Independent	36%	37%	28%
White	41%	35%	25%
Hispanic	39%	38%	23%
Black	27%	43%	30%
18 – 29 y/o	36%	43%	21%
30 – 44 y/o	49%	32%	19%
45 – 64 y/o	37%	34%	28%
65 +	35%	35%	30%

What's the bombshell headline here?

It's not that a plurality of overall likely voters say they will participate (39%) or even that a large percentage (35%) say they won't. It's not that 47% of Democrats say they will participate vs. 42% of Republicans that say they won't participate (indeed juicy stuff).

The headline is that among all of these demographic groups in the chart above, 18 – 29-year-olds, the generation most steeped in tech, is not buying it! Who would have known!

Note, I did not include ideology, but for more perspective, those most inclined to reject the Fourth Industrial Revolution are no surprise those who identify as *very conservative* (47%) and on par with 18 – 29-year-olds!

Forecast

In retrospect, it should come as little surprise that the generation that invented tech addiction as we know it, i.e., most likely to report anxiety when not attached to their devices, unable to sleep without their phone turned off, etc., might yearn for a world where they have a break from it all.

Many know the horror stories of suicide as a result of cyberbullying and, consequently, over-identifying with an online avatar or persona. Many have been introduced to online pornography from too early an age. Having unlimited and unregulated time on their devices, including some or all of the above – games, social media, chat, text, online pornography, and beyond.

It then comes as no surprise that the notion of merging with the internet of things or with artificial intelligence, as suggested in the video on the Fourth Industrial Revolution produced by the World Economic Forum, is tantamount to crossing the Rubicon for Generation Z. Regarding a life of being hyperconnected and practically wearing tech for well over a decade, Gen Z can confidently say “been there, done that.”

One could argue that too many have spent so much time in front of screens and have been bombarded with so much noise, one wonders how many can remain in complete silence for twenty minutes with their eyes closed while awake, or even conjure up a thought that has not been influenced by some external advertisement/message/meme.

Therefore, an entirely human experience and without the mob of social media and minus the blitz of visual assaults from screens requires a digital detox first. Then, followed by a yearning for natural forms of intelligence, such as wisdom, skills in indispensable back to basics professions, real experiences, and the ability to create unimpeded as humans have done for millions of years appears to be in order among Generation Z.

Conclusion

The First Industrial Revolution did not require a conference among the world's elite. Contrary to the popular notion that this was a power grab among Capitalists and Industrialists, look at the once previously thriving communities built along canals and railroads, especially in the Northeast.

The simplified Marxist analysis says that humans were abused by greedy Capitalists and forced to work 12 to 16-hour days. Apparently, Marx never visited the countryside during his lifetime, where farmers often broke their backs. As the old saying goes, *a farmer's work is never done*, and it often included up to 18-hour days.

While factory work was no walk in the park and was most certainly dangerous, how could one believe farming in the 19th century was easier? It wasn't and still isn't. Horrific accidents were frequent and one bad harvest was all too often a nightmare come true. To this day, farmers still experience high rates of suicide and alcoholism.

The point is, while the Industrial Revolution brought notable gaps between the haves and have nots, the turn of the century (from the 19th to the 20th) witnessed an unprecedented rise in the living standard.

The living standard rose so much that a family no longer needed to send their six-year-old boy to work in the mines, which previously was out of necessity to put food on the table. Here is a thought exercise, how can the stroke of a legislative pen alone end what was once centuries practice – of sending a young boy to work to help prevent starvation for the family? Such logic insists that legislation can ban poverty. It doesn't work like that. It ignores economic forces that did the real heavy lifting.

The standard of living rose because the forces of the Industrial Revolution brought about affordable goods that improved the lives of millions. Also, from 1800 to 1900, the prices of most commodities and products fell significantly. This meant more savings for the average American. Contrast with today, the price of most *necessities* continues to rise and has for decades.

But most importantly, the long and grueling process that resulted in the most significant rise in the standard of living up until that point did **not require the convening of the elite in Davos**.

Today, if you ask most Americans, and particularly those 18 – 29, they ultimately do not want to participate in the remaking of an entire way of life that is planned from the very upper echelons of 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 NGOs, 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.

EMI Research Solutions

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