

FACULTY RESEARCH FUND

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Proposal Title: Should We Stay or Should We Go Now? Examining Americans' Attitudes Towards Separation and Unity

Principal Investigator: Cameron Wimpy
College of Liberal Arts and Communication
Department of Political Science

ABSTRACT

Many pundits have argued that America is more polarized today than any point since the dawn of the Civil War. Indeed, studies conducted at [Pew Research Center](#) over the past few years illustrate the increasingly stark disagreement on such issues as the economy, racial justice, climate change, law enforcement, international engagement and a long list of other issues. While the Civil War may seem a distant historical artifact, the desire for separation should not be considered out of the question. We do not have to look very far to realize that the U.S. is not the only country wrestling with deepening political fissures, with British voters electing to remove the United Kingdom from the European Union. The current politically charged environment provides fertile ground to revisit the question, *would Americans be supportive of a great "national divorce?"* And, if so, what are the correlates that predict that desire for disunion? In this proposal, we develop a research plan that combines the methodologies of public opinion research and experimental design to gain unique causal leverage to answer these research questions. We plan to analyze the collected data and submit two papers to a national scholarly conference and respected peer-reviewed journals. The long-term goal for the project is to gain ongoing funding for continued measurement on these issues over time.