

A Nonpartisan Metric to Rank Public Policy Solutions  
An excerpt from Politics 4.0: A Unifying Theory

Jonathan M Denn  
Virtual Committees, llc

Workshop on the Ostrom Workshop – WOW7 Conference  
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN  
June 19-21, 2024

This paper was presented as part of a conference and has not been peer reviewed.  
Copyright remains with the author.

Every good regulator of a system must be a model of the system.<sup>1</sup> Currently, trust in American institutions is low: Congress 8%, Newspapers 18%, Public Schools 26%, SCOTUS 27%, Criminal Justice 27%, Religion 32%, Medical System 34%.<sup>2</sup> If all of these institutions were good models of our democratic republic, one would expect ratings to be at least above 50% and preferably in supermajority territory.

When and why is it appropriate to deny the supermajority's will? This paper will answer the question as an inversion. What can a supermajority agree on, and why don't we decide between those leaderboard solutions first?

One of humankind's outstanding achievements was setting out to sea and arriving at our destination. It took a reliable sextant, compass, and improving latitudinal and longitudinal maps. There was a raging debate about whether the solution to longitude would come from the stars or timekeeping. The latter's challenge was building a reliable timepiece that would function in inhospitable marine conditions. Still, at its simplest, the missing piece of the puzzle was—a standard unit of measure. John Harrison<sup>3</sup>, the clockmaker who solved the puzzle, long struggled to prove his solution because of competing intellectual forces and their perceived superiority.

Politically, we seem to have a similar problem today. We are setting off on political seas worldwide and don't seem to be able to get to where we want to go, either. There are, once again, warring strategic ideologies (political parties) and mechanical pragmatism (human ingenuity). Contrary to popular belief, there are asynchronous (competitive) and synchronous (cooperative) boats in both the private and public sectors. Yet, politically, we frequently land somewhere less desirable.

Perhaps the way out of this tragicomedy of the commons is simply a reliable nonpartisan measure for public policies. Then there would be rankings, subject to structured debates around the key reasons for and against, the Theory of Second Best<sup>4</sup> (almost the same upside with much less downside), the shifting coalitions of strange bedfellows, and how best to protect specific roles in society from the tyrannies of the many or the few.

By having a model that rates, narrates, and curates supermajority solutions, we can rely on the Wisdom of the Crowd<sup>5</sup>, the Law of Large Numbers<sup>6</sup>, Mean Reversion<sup>7</sup>, and the First Principle<sup>8</sup>. The goal is to show how trust in supermajority solutions can restore trust in the institutions of our democratic republic.

While this paper is expressly on a Nonpartisan Metric to Rank Public Policy Solutions, it is part of Politics 4.0: A Unifying Theory. The following is a brief overview to give context to the metric.

Politics 1.0 is a ruling party. Politics 2.0 involves a two-party system and binary thinking. Politics 3.0 consists of the noise our hyper-connected world has wrought, and Politics 4.0 uses a Ground Truth based on a four-square to give solutions a nonpartisan rating.

---

<sup>1</sup> Conant, R. & Ashby, W.R. (1970). Every good regulator of a system must be a model of that system. *Int. J. Systems Sci.*, 1970, vol. 1, No. 2, 89-97. [http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/books/Conant\\_Ashby.pdf](http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/books/Conant_Ashby.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/harrisons-clocks-longitude-problem>

<sup>4</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/restud/article-abstract/24/1/1/1542458?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

<sup>5</sup> <https://web.stanford.edu/~csimoiu/doc/wisdom-of-crowds.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/mathematics/laws-of-large-number>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/economics-econometrics-and-finance/mean-reversion>

<sup>8</sup> <https://fs.blog/first-principles/>

Politics 4.0's Ground Truth<sup>9</sup> is that—*There is time to save and a time to spend, a time for freedom and a time for laws; where can we agree?* This empowers a model-based AI and machine learning to help humans make sense of chaotic public policy problems and sort out the thousands of variables into something that more resembles a menu or sports standings.

In building any model, George E.P. Box<sup>10</sup> warned, "Essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful." And that of Enrique Fermi<sup>10</sup>, "With four parameters I can fit an elephant, and with five I can make him wiggle his trunk." There is certainly some controversy about models and ground truth. Economics is based on homo economicus<sup>11</sup>; Damasio<sup>12</sup> tells us instead that we are feeling beings who think, and that behavioral economics is likewise useful.

The useful part of Politics 4.0's nonpartisan metric is comparing the nonpartisan forecasts with exponential informed polling, which, by design, would yield a higher trust rating than other institutions. The average nonpartisan rating of the Politics 4.0 prototype's (PolicyKeys.com) 50 solutions is 72%, 2x – 9x that of the institutions in the first paragraph. (100% would be unanimous in favor, and 0% unanimous against.)

### Politics 4.0's Four Laws of Public Policy Formation

First Law: People with short-term focus naturally protect their wages, jobs, status, profits, and wealth.

Second Law: People with longer-term focus place bets to make life better, longer, easier, or different.

Third Law: The clash of the short-term and long-term naturally produces noise, angst, and conflict.

Fourth Law: A nonpartisan score can be applied to public policy solutions so that people can better decide what to support.

### Politics 4.0's Four Primary Conditions

Politics 4.0 has four foundational conditions: Abundance (A), Commerce (C), Governance (G), and Thrift (T). Poetically, ACGT also represents our political DNA, yielding four base pairs that set the Politically Balanced Table, which is pegged on the ground truth.

Politics 4.0 doesn't recognize Liberals and Conservatives per se, but each side of the table has those with a bias towards change and a bias towards the status quo, which define the Eight Information Walls. More on that in a moment.

(AG) Abundance Governance (Large Governments and NGOs): The US has a sovereign currency and spends into the private sector through taxation, borrowing, and quantitative easing. NGOs have endowments and large donor bases to support their national and international efforts. The private sector is wary of governments deciding what's best for us instead of consumers and producers.

(AC) Abundance Commerce (New Businesses and Technology): These roles strive for innovative solutions to problems. While exciting for those businesses and their potential consumers, they are not

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://issues.org/ai-ground-truths-human-constructions-jaton/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://todayinsci.com/F/Fermi\\_Enrico/FermiEnrico-Quotations.htm](https://todayinsci.com/F/Fermi_Enrico/FermiEnrico-Quotations.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-04194-030>

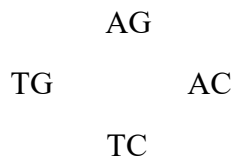
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/297609/descartes-error-by-antonio-damasio/>

viewed favorably by existing owners and employees, and those who recently placed their bets. For example, one new battery type vs. another newer disruptive battery.

(TG) Thrift Governance (Local Governments, Guilds, and Consumers): These are local governments (that do not have a sovereign currency), guilds and unions, and local consumers who frequently don't have the means of raising vast quantities of money to solve their perceived problems. E.g., Fighting over a bigger piece of the pie.

(TC) Thrift Commerce (Established Supply Chains and Jobs): These businesses make goods and services available and create the bulk of jobs. Employees who are also consumers are conflicted between having good-paying jobs and abundant, affordable goods and services. The change-biased side is slightly more service-oriented, while the status quo side is more capital-intensive.

To review the four sides of the table, look like...



Most people identify with one side of the table more than the others. While you may not agree with the person opposite you at this literal and figurative four-top table, you often agree with the person on either side of you. Check it out for yourself in the diagram. You have one of your political DNA initials in common with each person next to you. You seemingly have nothing in common with the person opposite you. They are frequently referred to as—*those people*. But you both have the same wingmen and wing-people, depending on how you describe such things.

How wrong can that person be? And that goes for everyone at the table.

### Eight Information Walls

Each of the four sides of the politically balanced table has a bias for change and a bias for the status quo. Each of these Eight Information Walls tries to make their points to support their best interests, whether the First or Second Law of Public Policy Formation. Making sense of eight points of view on every public policy is almost impossible. The media frequently employs the rule of three<sup>13</sup> to engage readers, but they interpret the eight walls through their own bias<sup>14</sup>. This is the noise in the Third Law.

### One Page Narrative Tool (OPNT)

Instead of having experts or political operatives interpret what we should support and why—a useful mechanical system might reduce the noise. The central thesis in Kahneman, Sunstein, and Sibony's book *Noise, A Flaw in Human Judgement*, is that a mechanical system should be sandwiched between

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-use-the-rule-of-three-in-writing>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias>

humans to eliminate bias and noise<sup>15</sup>. Politics 4.0 One Page Narrative Tool is a mechanical forecasting system.

### Forecasting

Tetlock and Gardner make the point in *Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction*<sup>16</sup> that the best forecasters have a system to make small and frequent adjustments as needed. Forecasting is a process that can be mastered like any other skill.<sup>17</sup>

Another take on this is found in *How to Measure Anything: Finding the Value of Intangibles in Business* by Hubbard. His central thesis is that teams and individuals can be calibrated to provide better forecasts. Not many people come pre-calibrated to understand the Eight Information Walls, but they will be excellent participants in the Wisdom of the Crowd type of forecasting. Editors, teachers, students, and wonks can improve their nonpartisan forecasting skills if they choose.

### Keynesian Beauty Contests Criticism

A flaw in the Wisdom of the Crowd is asking people to guess what others will think when those opinions are purely subjective. The polling done in the Politics 4.0 model asks the participants to self-identify with however many roles of the 128 provided. Then, an AI sorts a likely YES or NO response and a likely Key YES or NO reason. Then, a calibrated editor reviews it for salience. Then, we ask the reader if they agree with the YES or NO. These results are tabulated for comparison. The reader retains their sovereignty to agree or disagree based on their own objectively subjective view of the world.

### Paretotopian Goal Alignment

Politics 4.0 nonpartisan rating system resembles Drexler's Paretotopian Goal Alignment<sup>18</sup>. Having a society that tends towards Pareto-like solutions that satisfy 80% of the populace is similar. During the prototype testing, PolicyKeys scored over 100 solutions and published fifty. The average score of the top ten solutions was over 80%<sup>19</sup>, the next ten averaged above 75%, the next ten were almost 75%, and the average of the entire leaderboard was 72%. The lowest-rated solution that still garnered majority support from *each* of the four sides of the balanced political table was 59%.

The sausage-making of laws and the earmarks that grease the gears of government are still needed to choose between leaderboard-worthy solutions.

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/daniel-kahneman/noise/9780316451383/?lens=little-brown>

<sup>16</sup> <https://archive.org/details/superforecasting0000tetl>

<sup>17</sup> <https://fs.blog/ten-commandments-for-superforecasters/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.effectivealtruism.org/articles/ea-global-2018-paretotopian-goal-alignment>

<sup>19</sup> <https://policykeys.com/publicpolicyblog/2023-top-ten-public-policy-ideas/>

## Predictive and/or Descriptive

Like life, where you can't get a do-over from a past decision; you can only start over again having had that experience. Politics 4.0's nonpartisan ratings are both predictive and descriptive. In other words, what people think today with a "blink" understanding of the solution is descriptive, and what the person might believe after giving their nonconscious mind a chance to process the information is predictive. In between the blink and a fixed solution mindset is both. Politics 4.0 suffers from the same all too human fate. Exponential polling, ten times the data currently studied, will help smooth out the reflectivity of the forecasts.

Owing to the Ground Truth, machine learning, LLM, and heuristic models will soon be able to pre-score every public policy solution on the planet. This will likely be possible before 2030. Deciding between the leaderboard-worthy solutions remains squarely in the human domain.

## Role-Based Politics

There are 128 roles in 16 Influence Rows, 16 Subcultural Windows, and 8 Bias Columns (strong to weak for change through the status quo), and they all lean on their Eight Information Walls.

The top row of each side ([OPNT](#)) tends to have the most influence, and the bottom line of each side tends to have the least. The two in the middle are roughly the same. For example, the eight Special Interest Groups are the largest, formal or informal. The eight kinds of Republicans and Democrats are patterned after mainstream commentary. Independents were loosely patterned after Killian's *The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents*.<sup>20</sup>

Narrating all 128 Roles is outside the scope of this paper. In setting up your political twin at MyPoliticalTwin.us, each role has a description and, in most cases, a quantifier for each role's size in society. MyPoliticalTwin.us will launch shortly; for those who can't wait, there is a twin prototype at PolicyKeys.com, but the twin will only give you the result of the sample puzzle. PolicyKeys is on hiatus, likely to return as a group exercise for the classroom to stimulate critical political thinking. The twin has sixteen sets of eight roles organized by influence rows from the Politically Balanced Table. Readers are asked to identify with 1, 2, 3, or none of each set of eight roles to yield a readable personal public policy advisor report/survey.

The Politics 4.0 US Model might be likened to a democratic republic, not of 50 States, but instead of 128 Roles. Will a majority of each role say YES or NO to the proposed solution?

## Politics 4.0's Four Values

1. All roles are heroes. We won't goad you into hating other Americans.
2. Talk about public policy, not public figures. There are plenty of places to do that.
3. We score private, public, and their partnership solutions.
4. We start with a level playing field.

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-swing-vote-the-untapped-power-independents>

## The Typology of Key YES and NO Reasons

We extract 16 Key YES Reasons and 16 Key NO Reasons from the Eight Information Walls. The typology is called EMIT, which is used to find the signal in the Politics 3.0 noise. Emotions: Envy, Spite, Sloth, and Greed are the shadow side of Self-Sacrifice, Nurture, Tough Love, and Self-Love. Money: Wages, Jobs, Profits, and Wealth. Interests: Facts, Beliefs, Values, and Ethics. Timespan: Past, Present, Near Years, and Decades.

Editors start with this mechanical typology and then adjust for redundancy, two sides of the same coin, clarity, and readability.

## Two Model-Based AI Filters

Politics 4.0 used Network Effects Theory to design two levels of model-based AI. The first, Situational Affinity Teams (SAT9), is close ties to other roles and their opposites to set up 256 deadlocked ‘supreme courts’ where each role is the “chief justice” in a pre-disposed 5-4 and 4-5 bench. This yields an internal reliability error margin for each solution.

The other model-based AI, Birds of a Feather, is based on loose ties to beliefs, attitudes, values, and ethics. Currently, twelve sets with four variables yield over 16 million possible combinations. With this AI, humans pre-score 40 ‘archetype’ roles that epitomize a primary loose tie aspect. Then, the editors accept or overrule the AI’s general YES or NO prediction and note the specific Key reason.

Only the polling will tell if the AI or the editors are better predictors in each role’s call per solution.

## Hyper-Personalized Polling

The meme of four blindfolded people holding different parts of an elephant and describing what they feel: a leaf, a snake, a tree trunk, and a branch—is an apt image of citizens describing their support or opposition to any public policy solution. Of the 128 roles, most people will probably feel an affinity to only one dozen to three dozen roles.

By affinity, they could personally identify with their current situation, aspirations, or feelings for a family member or friend. How can anyone 36/128 or less than 28% of a group speak for the whole group without a more profound understanding of the topic?

Again, Wisdom of the Crowd is the leading solution with a model that could also regulate the system—in this case, pressuring candidates to lead the supermajority instead of pandering to the fringes (change or status quo, freedom or laws, spending or saving, present or future) to attain a razor-thin majority of a false equivalent solution<sup>21</sup>. Some candidates will realize running out in front of the Supermajority crowd and yelling “Follow me” might be a winning strategy.

## Countries, States, and Counties

The One Page Narrative Tool (OPNT/OpenT), the engine that drives the model-based AI and the hyper-personalized polling, can be readily adapted for other US states and counties. Different countries

---

<sup>21</sup> <https://effectiviology.com/false-equivalence/>



will need to have the OPNT adapted to their culture. Likewise, cities would have to have the adaptation. Once their new OPNT is set, the SAT9 and Birds of a Feather AI must be re-calibrated.

### Inter-departmental and Inter-collegiate Competition

Every sport keeps score. Now, public policy can become a sport. Podium ideas are leaderboard-worthy. The debate can inform the Theory of Second Best. Ethics can parse the humanitarian. Values can preach the beliefs. Science can weigh conflicting evidence. Businesses can argue the benefits of free markets or public/private partnerships. Leading solutions in one country can inform another. Advanced problem-solving techniques can become mainstream: three-way trades, first principle, systems theory, and scenario planning. Silos can better share. All solutions get rated.

### Metrics Lead to Surprising Solutions

During the prototype testing on PolicyKeys.com, the puzzle of the working poor in America was addressed, and four solutions were identified: Raising the National Minimum Wage, Universal Basic Income, Raising the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and a Tax Credit for Employers to Pay a Living Wage in the first place.

In prescoring the solutions, the first two, Raising the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and UBI, didn't reach the minimum standard of likely getting majority support from *each* of the four sides of the balanced political table. The cost of living in the States is too different to make an NMW viable. The latter, UBI, is anathema to small businesses, as paying people for not working will only make filling jobs even more difficult.

Raising the EITC to P50L, halfway (50%) between the poverty line (P) and the living wage (L) quickly became a leaderboard-worthy solution. The cost of crime in the US is 2x to 10x more<sup>22</sup> than the cost of bringing all full-time workers up to a living wage<sup>23</sup>.

While there is some controversy about the Gini coefficient<sup>24</sup> related to income inequality and its correlation to crime, common sense says that people making a living wage don't need to rob liquor stores to make ends meet. Crimes of despair have to be correlated with the amount of despair in the country. The P50L nonpartisan score was 75% ±2%.

Surprisingly, another solution scored even higher than the P50L—a WELCOME Tax Credit for Willing Employers Living Compensation Exemption. WELCOME scored 78% ±3%.

In other words, while great airtime is spent debating the NMW and UBI, time might be better spent parsing out the details of implementing the P50L and/or WELCOME for a quicker solution to the despair of millions of hard-working Americans.

### Conclusion

The most surprising revelation was the P50L and WELCOME would have the same outcomes for the working poor, crime, and the net effect on government expenditures and taxes. Yet, some liberals have

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-17-732-highlights.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://policykeys.com/publicpolicyblog/tariffs-rip-us-off-how-about-the-p50l-eitc-instead/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/gini-index-coefficient-distribution-of-family-income/country-comparison/>



a visceral repulsion to lowering corporate taxes, and some conservatives have the same reaction to raising the EITC. The problem in both cases is the emotion of spite. Both solutions have the least political friction, yet politics as usual, has millions of Americans stuck in a doom loop, and we all continue to pay higher taxes, endure unsafe situations, suffer unproductive industries, and have to listen to ever more political vitriol.

Using a nonpartisan metric and words appears to be better than words, or spin, alone.

To avoid bogging down this paper with attachments, an early prototype of a National Idea Leaderboard can be found at PolicyKeys.com (<https://policykeys.com/leaderboard>). Version 1 of the Political Twin is also available there.

The exponential hyper-personal polling site can be found momentarily at MyPoliticalTwin.us, which will also house Version 2 of the Leaderboard. You will be able to access a weekly personalized public policy report for free, or with a subscription any report/survey on demand.

The United States Public Policy Leadership Association, which will steward the nonpartisan rating system to stimulate nonpartisan leadership behaviors among the US people, can be found at [USPPL.org](http://USPPL.org).

An example of a fully scored OPNT can be found [here](https://policykeys.com/lastresult). (<https://policykeys.com/lastresult>)

Access to the Model-Based AI source code will be considered case-by-case.

End [::]

Contact

Jonathan Denn

[jon@USPPL.org](mailto:jon@USPPL.org)

[jmdenn@me.com](mailto:jmdenn@me.com)

(860) 930-0264

PO Box 2078

Dennis, MA 02638