

Size of Role of U.S. President

~ Is the candidate big enough? ~

(Discussion draft, 6-20-2024)

Discussion of presidential politics routinely includes references to the constitution and to the so-called founding fathers. Absent is discussion of the size of the role, and historic change in the size; and the relationship to the changes in the electorate. This seems absurd considering the stakes.

It is unlikely that the drafters felt they were designing a system for international leadership in which the President would require the capability of a global CEO. It is more likely they saw the role as lawyer-size, with responsibility for domestic order and protection of trade.

It is also interesting to consider the capability of the electorate at that time. While gender and race do not inform us, land ownership is significant. In colonial days, a landowner was usually an owner/manager of an enterprise.

Related to business, the concept “big enough” for a role is understood to mean that roles have sizes and that people have levels of capability related to their ability to handle a role successfully. Management science, particularly Stratified Systems Theory/Science, determines the size of a role, and, absent a personal assessment, assumes that a person handling a role successfully is big enough for that role; acknowledging that a person may be capable of handling a bigger role, or may be in a mode of capability maturation as to, in time, be able to handle a larger role.

I will revisit strata hereinafter, but consider a line-worker, laborer, to be stratum 1, landowners and lawyers stratum 2 or 3, while a global CEO is stratum 7. This means that the electorate, limited to landowners, was mostly strata 2 and 3, filling a stratum 3 (possibly 4, or 4 mode) presidential role (See Charts 1 & 2 on Page 4). Politics, then, operated in a range in which the relationship between electorate and leadership was closer, and the relationship between the electoral college and leadership was collegial. The voters were more able to assess the capability of a candidate.

What, then, is the present size of the role of U.S. President? I am of the view that the size of the role increased dramatically over time, and that our so-called founding fathers failed to craft a methodology to deal with that change, as the U.S. became vested, or saddled, with the responsibility of today's global standing.

Again, the size of the role of CEO of a major global business is, in Stratified Systems and Requisite Organization terminology, stratum 7. A line worker in that organization is stratum 1, the worker's boss is stratum 2 and the boss's boss is stratum 3. A contributing lawyer may also be stratum 3. Military equivalents place a 4-star general at stratum 7, a colonel stratum 4 and a private stratum 1 (See Chart 3 on Page 4). This perspective is important because most people do not understand, and cannot grapple with, the fact that there are several strata of ascending capability between a lawyer, or a stratum 3 boss's boss, and a global CEO. Lawyers are bright, 80th percentile or greater bright, but their role is much smaller than a global CEO. A lawyer, whose capability is no greater than the size of the lawyer role, is not big enough for the role of global CEO.

Is age a factor? Wired-in mental processing capability matures with age, regardless of education and experience, but in different, discontinuous, modes for different people (See Chart 4 on Page 4), unless or until cognitive issues interfere with the process. The question of how old is too old, may be speculation about the age at which the odds of a stroke, or other neurological disease process, are so high (or have been reached), that the subject should not be considered for a sensitive role.

With respect to high office, minimum age may be more important than old age. When the Constitution was crafted, age 35 was considered old enough, recognition that the difference between age 18 and age 35 reflects a maturation of potential capability.

It was felt, when the pre-industrial age Constitution was written, that a 35-year-old might be "big enough" for the role of President. There was no methodology to address the notion that, during World Wars I and II, the size of the role may have become the size of the role of a global CEO. A 35-year-old has not attained the maturation of mental processing capability to effectively fill a level 7 position.

The world most voters experience, and where goods and services are produced (line worker, boss, and boss's boss), is life within the first three levels of human capability and includes the bulk of the population. Levels 4 through 7, comprising a small, but integral, part of the population, are abstractions the electorate cannot adequately grasp, and the political parties have no methodology to find, and present for consideration, candidates big enough for the role. Time after time voters must choose between level 3 candidates who flounder in the position.

The expansion of suffrage to include line workers and laborers, the stratum 1 salt of the earth, resulted in increasing political pressure placing electability over capability, leaving voters with a Hobson's choice. The voters are cheated and there is a tugging down of the size of the role.

When a role has been filled by a person who is not big enough for the role, two phenomena occur: Performance is sub-optimal, and the role becomes smaller. If this tugging down continues, instead of global leadership, we can expect the U.S. presidency to become no bigger than a member of the European Union's leadership.

I suspect Xi Jinping, leading a globally positioned meritocracy, is well aware of what is happening to our presidency.

By Mark Goodall

Table 13.1
Rough Estimate of Size of Population of Successive Levels of Capability

Chart 1

Order of Symbolic Complexity	Type of Work Processing	Description of Level	Approximate Numbers In			
			21- to 70-year-old Population		21- to 50-year-old Population	
			%	No. per Million	%	No. per Million
5 th	Declarative+	Universals	0.0003	3	0.0001	1
4 th	Parallel	Stratum VIII	0.01	100	0.001	10
	Serial	Stratum VII	0.05	500	0.005	50
	Cumulative	Stratum VI	0.1	1,000	0.03	300
	Declarative	Stratum V	0.5	5,000	0.07	700
3 rd	Parallel	Stratum IV	1	10,000	0.5	5,000
	Serial	Stratum III	7	70,000	4	40,000
	Cumulative	Stratum II	40	400,000	40	400,000
	Declarative	Stratum I	40	400,000	40	400,000
2 nd	Parallel	Limited	8	80,000	9	90,000
	Serial	Mental Disability	1	10,000	2	20,000
	Cumulative	Mental Handicap	0.7	7,000	1	10,000
	Declarative	Mental Handicap	0.5	5,000	1	10,000

Jaques, *The Life & Behavior of Living Organisms*, P188

Chart 3

Time-Span of Role	Stratum	Mental Process	Industry	Army
50 YRS	STR VIII	Parallel	Super Corporation CEO	5-Star General
	STR VII	Serial	Corporate CEO	Army (4-Star General)
	STR VI	Cumulative	Corporate EVP	Corps (3-Star LTG)
	STR V	Declarative	Business Unit President	Division (2-Star MG)
2 YRS	STR IV	Parallel	General Manager	Brigade (1-Star BG Col.)
	STR III	Serial	Unit Manager	Battalion (Lt. Col. Major)
1 YR	STR II	Cumulative	First Line Manager	Company (Cpt./Lt.)
	STR I	Declarative	Operator	Pvt & NCO (E7-E1)

Jaques & Cason, *Requisite Organization*, PP1

SST Charts

Chart 2

Stratified Systems Theory

SST

INDIVIDUAL MATURATION BANDS	LEVELS OF TASK COMPLEXITY	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATA
MODE VII	CONSTRUCT COMPLEX SYSTEMS	VII CEO COO
MODE VI	OVERSEE COMPLEX SYSTEMS	VI EVP Business Unit President
MODE V	JUDGE DOWNSTREAM CONSEQUENCES	V GM
MODE IV	PARALLEL PROCESS MULTIPLE PATHS	IV Unit Manager
MODE III	CREATE ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS	III First Line Manager
MODE II	DIAGNOSTIC ACCUMULATION	II Shop & Office Floor
MODE I	OVERCOME OBSTACLES PRACTICAL JUDGMENT	I

Jaques & Cason, *Requisite Organization*, PP12

Chart 4

