

American Bureaucracies Today

Bureaucratic "Pathologies"

Pathology	Defined
Red Tape	refers to the complex maze of government rules, regulations, procedures, and paperwork that makes government so overwhelming to citizens that many people try to avoid any contact. The web of rules, regulations, procedures, and paperwork must be followed to get something done. Results from cumbersome rules and procedures because government agencies must hire based on "merit", must observe strict accounting rules, must supply Congress with detailed information on their programs and must allow for citizen access in countless ways. Meeting each need requires rules; enforcing such rules requires a listing of procedures and of course, forms!
Conflict	exists because some agencies often seem to be working at cross-purposes with other agencies and governmental departments. When Congress sets up agencies and programs, it often wants to achieve a number of different goals or finds that it cannot decide which goals it values the most. All members of Congress will want different things.
Duplication	sometimes called wasteful duplication, this occurs when two government agencies and/or departments appear to be doing the same thing. The same could be said for duplication- members of Congress have different goals and want different outcomes. The people who serve in government agencies and departments will also experience something similar.
Unchecked Growth	sometimes referred to as "imperialism", this refers to the tendency of agencies to grow unnecessarily and without regard to the benefits that their programs confer or the costs that they entail. Costs usually escalate in proportion to growth. Often results from government agencies seeking goals that are so vague and difficult to measure that it is hard to determine when goals have been attained.
Waste	spending more than is necessary to buy some products/services. Weak incentives to keep costs down- bureaucrats will not receive a reward for keeping costs down for their agency or department, the money goes back to the Treasury.