



The Life of Ants

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A centrally managed, but inherently unnatural, system requires a lot of inputs and control mechanisms to keep up the appearance of stability. Because everything is imposed from the top, not from the operation of rational choice from below, the level of costs rises in proportion to the level of desired control. By contrast, a society that relies on individual rational choice need only watch out for the outliers, such as criminal behavior. They can leave everything else alone, and manage things by exception, not by detailed specification.

Recently, [Fox News](#) reported the story of a little girl whose lunch box was disallowed (and her parents fined) because it did not meet some obscure standard. Who knew there were food police in school? "Trace Gallagher reported that a lunch inspector at the school told the girl she couldn't eat her turkey sandwich, banana, potato chips and apple juice. Instead, providing the girl with a USDA-approved lunch with the following guidelines: one serving of meat, one serving of grains, and two servings of fruit or vegetables."

Well, you learn something new every day. But the most interesting aspect of the incident came from a follow-up story. The inspection system is paid for by the administration's "[stimulus program.](#)" Stimulus program? But of course. The effort required to protect little girls from turkey sandwiches is not to be underestimated. Without billions, how could you afford it? Here's what it takes to [screen a sandwich](#):

it still isn't clear who the inspector was who deemed this little girl's lunch was unhealthy, but that it was an agent from the Department of Health and Human Services at the state level. Apparently a division within the department comes to the school every year to conduct an evaluation related to the More at Four program, which is a North Carolina state program.

Burrows said, "As part of the evaluation, they look at students lunches that are brought from home to make sure that they meet USDA guidelines. And this school, we're told, lost points this year because too

many children were bringing their lunches from home and they did not meet, according to this inspector, the USDA guidelines.”

The costs of running a society by detailed regulation do not scale in a linear fashion. Adding a single little thing requires committees to coordinate between committees; oversight and review functions; evaluation units and managers to manage everything. And that doesn't even count the cost of politically selling and defending each and every new mandate.

Defending and selling all these expansions of government power is also expensive because you have to beat down the objectors. The most interesting thing about reports that [Media Matters](#), a George Soros-funded tax-exempt organization, has an “enemies list” is that it exists at all. Because once you start, where does it end? A [leaked internal memorandum](#) shows that its confidential intention is to investigate “the backgrounds, connections, operations and political and financial activities of the individuals” of the following:

News Corp

Fox News Channel

Fox Business Network

Fox News' websites

Conservative news sites

WorldNetDaily

BigHollywood.com

NewsMax

BigGovernment.com

Conservative think tanks

The Heritage Foundation

American Enterprise Institute

Cato Institute

News Corp executives

Rupert Murdoch

Chase Carey

David DeVoe

Lawrence Jacobs

James Murdoch

Conservative donors

Peter Thiel

Richard Mellon Scaife

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

John M. Olin Foundation

Koch Family Foundations

Fox News executives

CEO Roger Ailes

Senior vice president Michael Clemente

Vice president of news Sean Smith

Vice president of new editorial product Jay Wallace

Fox Business Network executive vice president Kevin Magee

Fox personalities

Glenn Beck

Sean Hannity

Bill O'Reilly

Fox senior production and corporation staff

Hannity executive producer John Finley

On the Record executive producer Meade Cooper

O'Reilly Factor senior executive producer David Tabacoff

Fox & Friends executive producer Lauren Petterson

Political figures

Carly Fiorina

David Vitter

Eric Cantor

John Boehner

Mitch McConnell

Michele Bachmann

Steve King

Whether or not one believes Media Matters is acting properly or improperly with respect to their tax exempt status, anyone can see this effort will cost a lot of money. What is less obvious is that it is also prone to geometric increase. Because the list isn't long enough. It is never long enough.

