

Organizational Structure and the Disciples of the Dog. Organizational Cynicism

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Organizational Structure and the Disciples of the Dog. Organizational Cynicism Dennis Krings-Ernst Intermediate Diploma Thesis from the year 2003 in the subject Business economics - Personnel and Organisation, grade: 8/10, Maastricht University (FdewB), 14 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Cynicism has become a common state of mind in today's society. A cynic is defined by the Oxford Learner's dictionary as "a person who believes that people do not do things for good, sincere or noble reasons" (Oxford Learner's, 1989). The roots of cynicism lead back to the ancient Greeks, where cynicism was a school of thought and way of life. In the early times, cynics were accepted as progressive and serious and took part in philosophical debates. When philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle became more famous and increased their followers' base, the cynics ceased to exist as a school of thought. A short revival took place during the third century in Rome, showing that cynicism seems to thrive whenever corruption is an issue. The word cynicism itself might have originated from the Greek expression for dog, kyon, which is why cynics were frequently called the disciples of the dog. The most famous Greek cynic was Diogenes of Sinope, a student of Antisthenes. He became famous for carrying a light around during bright daylight, in order to find one honest man (Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998). This act very well describes the way cynics think: A cynic is overly critical to any type of organization, believing that the individual is the natural unit of human life and therefore expecting others to behave in their self interest and opposing any institution, such as churches or even the government. Today, cynicism is less of a philosophical issue but more a term associated with negative meanings and a way to mock the ones in power through sarcasm. Cynicism should not be confused with scepticism, though, which is a form of healthy, critical thinking, while cynics are generally in doubt of anything that humans claim to do. The big difference is that sceptics are open to change, while cynics aren't. One might expect too much cynicism to cause an organization to malfunction. This makes the following question an important issue for organizational design: How are the structures of today's organizations related to organizational cynicism and what can organizations do to cope with it?

In answering this broad problem statement, the paper will deal with the following sub questions:



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