Toward a theory of reinstatement: Seven motivations for reinstatement as relationship repair

By: Matthew W. McCarter and Arran Caza

Abstract:

There is a long, interdisciplinary tradition of examining why organizations remove privileges from members as a part of disciplinary action. In contrast, little is known about why organizations return privileges after disciplinary action has occurred. Nonetheless, such reinstatement is ubiquitous in organizations. This paper provides a starting point for a theory of reinstatement by using the emerging theoretical domain of relationship repair. Treating reinstatement as relationship repair highlights the importance of causal attribution, social equilibrium, relationship structure, and power as means of relationship repair. The paper uses these four bases of relationship repair to develop a series of specific motivations for why managers might reinstate privileges.

Keywords: reinstatement | employee discipline | organizational punishment | intra-organizational relations

Article:

Introduction

Recently, a Pennsylvanian surgeon was barred from performing specific types of cancer-related surgeries. The peer review committee to which he was subject informed him that he could not perform these surgical procedures, though he was able to continue all other medical duties at the hospital where he worked. Following numerous petitions from patients and a court mandate, his full surgical privileges were reinstated (Waters 2007).

This case is just one of many instances of reinstatement in which managers and other organizational agents return privileges that they have previously taken away. Reinstatement occurs in all organizational settings (e.g., religious, athletic, professional, and commercial). For

example, members of Christian churches may have member privileges (e.g., taking of the sacrament or communion) reinstated after making penance and receiving forgiveness (Augustine-Adams 1998–1999; Estes 1972). In athletic teams, players regain play privileges after being "benched," as was the case of college football star Ricky Jean-Francois (Fernandez 2008). Professionals also lose and regain privileges from professional bodies, as in the cases of lawyers and medical doctors (Grant and Alfred 2007; Levine 1998). And, of course, reinstatement is often at the root of many industrial labor disputes. In a memorable historical example, more than 5,000 maintenance workers had their terminations rescinded after wage disputes were settled (*New York Times* 1936). As these examples demonstrate, reinstatement is ubiquitous and varied; many instances of discipline have the potential to occasion reinstatement.

Despite this ubiquity and decades of calls from scholars (e.g., Jones 1961; McDermott and Newhams 1971), there has been very little research on reinstatement (cf. Bakirci 2004; Bamberger and Donahue 1999; Rodgers *et al*. 1986). This dearth contrasts with the vast body of work examining why managers discipline (e.g., remove privileges) (Church 1963; Solomon 1964; Wheeler 1976), how managers discipline (Kulik 2004; Trevino and Weaver 1998), and how transgressors behave after being disciplined (Johnson 1985; Trice 1990). The purpose of this paper is to begin filling this void concerning reinstatement. The discussion provides an initial framework for the study of reinstatement by considering what conditions would induce managers to reinstate previously removed privileges.

This paper is divided into four sections. Section one defines reinstatement and discusses its practical and theoretical relevance. Section two reviews the relationship-repair domain and explains how reinstatement is a form of relationship repair. In doing so, the current paper extends the emerging relationship-repair domain by discussing power as an overlooked basis for relationship repair. Section three develops seven propositions about why managers may reinstate member privileges. The last section discusses the theoretical implications of reinstatement and suggests directions for future research.

Reinstatement

In this section, reinstatement is defined, placed in the context of organizational discipline, and discussed in terms of its practical and theoretical importance.

Definition

Reinstatement is any action where a manager or other agent restores previously removed organizational privileges to a recipient. For example, the surgeon discussed at the start of this article had his full surgical privileges restored through reinstatement from the peer review committee. For parsimony, this paper uses the term manager to refer to everyone who reinstates privileges; in this context, manager should therefore be understood to include anyone with the authority to remove and reinstate organizational privileges. This would include not only literal managers, but also religious leaders, military commanding officers, and members of disciplinary boards in various professional associations. Whenever one of these agents restores an organizational privilege that was previously taken away, reinstatement has occurred.

The definition of reinstatement is premised on the assumption that giving and receiving new privileges is not the same as restoring and regaining lost privileges (e.g., a promotion is not the same as being restored after a demotion). From the perspective of the recipient, the difference between gaining new privileges and regaining lost ones will be substantial, due to the endowment effect, which is a reliable psychological bias that causes individuals to over-value items in their possession relative even to identical items that they do not possess (Kahneman *et al*. 1990; Thaler 1980). Moreover, while there has been no formal study of the psychology of managers reinstating privileges, research on perspective-taking and empathy demonstrates that individuals are aware of endowment effects in others, allowing them to recognize that re-gaining is very different from initially receiving (Van Boven *et al*. 2000). In addition, since reinstatement is the return of lost privileges, it necessarily follows discipline, and therefore will usually be conducted amidst issues such as breached trust and negative emotions and exchanges (see Dirks *et al*. 2009 for a review). These negative conditions will reinforce the difference between reinstatement and the initial giving of privileges (Luce *et al*. 1997).

It is worth noting that this paper refers to individuals' reinstatement, but reinstatement is not restricted to a single individual. A collective may also be reinstated. For example, the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity had its pledging privileges reinstated after losing them for participating in illegal hazing activities (Maughan 2003). Similarly, three American universities which lost the privilege to conduct research after a suspension by federal mandate subsequently had these privileges reinstated (Sciarra 1999). However, for the sake of clarity and brevity, this paper refers only to the reinstatement of individuals' privileges.

It should also be noted that this paper is concerned only with the motivations for a manager to reinstate privileges and does not explore the processes of reinstating, the experience and concerns of the organizational member who is reinstated, or whether it is appropriate to reinstate privileges. Obviously, all of these are important issues, and must be addressed in developing a complete theory of reinstatement. However, as noted in the review above, there is currently no theory about reinstatement in organizations. As such, this paper begins at the beginning, by seeking to understand the motivations for reinstating privileges.

Practical and Theoretical Relevance

From a practical perspective, reinstatement is a vitally important issue, with potentially significant effects on the recipient, the manager, other organization members, the organization as a whole, and the greater public. Below, three diverse examples demonstrating the importance and complexity of reinstatement are presented.

The first example was documented by Connerley *et al*. (2001). The incident concerned a man named Randy who was convicted of manslaughter after killing his office romance partner. Randy served five years in prison, and then reapplied for his job, which he eventually regained. He was initially reinstated to exactly the same position, but this led to a series of confrontations with coworkers, and Randy had to be transferred. The confrontations continued, as did the transfers. Worse still, Randy repeated his past behavior: he attempted to begin another office romance and killed the woman for not reciprocating his interest. Randy was convicted of murder and the family of his victim sued the organization.

The second example is Jones' (1961) case of Tuff, an employee of a large manufacturing company who was terminated for assaulting a supervisor. He was later reinstated by a third-party arbitrator, and went on to perform excellently. Before being terminated, Tuff's workmanship, performance, and attitude were rated below average by his supervisors and he had received two warnings for absenteeism. However, upon returning to work after reinstatement, Tuff's performance improved in every way. After two years, he was rated above average by his supervisors, who commented that they admired his hard work.

Finally, in the American legal profession there is ongoing debate about the reinstatement of disbarred and suspended attorneys. As many as 200 previously disbarred or suspended attorneys are reinstated every year (Levine 1998). However, many legal scholars and concerned officials are dissatisfied with current state policies governing this process (Lacey 2001). In large part, this dissatisfaction reflects the absence of an accepted theoretical logic or established process for reinstatement, and one reason for this is lack of consensus about the appropriate motivations for reinstating lawyers (e.g., Davis 1996, Levine 1998; Rotunda and Johnson 1994). The debate has many legal scholars and professionals growing concerned about the integrity and image of their entire profession (Rotunda and Johnson 1994; also see Grant and Alfred 2007 for a discussion of similar issues among US physicians).

These examples highlight the fact that reinstatement in organizations is an important and complex issue. It is not as straightforward or inconsequential as its near absence from the literature suggests. Although there are potentially enormous consequences for individuals, organizations, and society, managers have no firm basis on which to make reinstatement decisions (Grant and Alfred 2007; Lacey 2001). As such, there can be little doubt of the practical benefit of better understanding reinstatement.

Along with its practical importance, a better understanding of reinstatement will also provide several theoretical contributions to organization science. The most obvious of these is parsimony through the integration of several disparate literatures. Reinstatement can encompass several related phenomena, such as reinstatement through arbitration, relenting after social ostracism, reintegration after communal and institutional punishment, and the readmission of individuals in mixed-motive, experimental gaming contexts (e.g., Bamberger and Donahue 1999; Braithwaite 1989; Cinyabuguma *et al*. 2005; Lacey 2001; Masclet 2003; Ouwerkerk 2003; Reitan 1996; Smith 1961; Williams 2001). A framework for understanding reinstatement in organizations could integrate these disparate findings into a unified whole.

In addition, advancement toward a theory of reinstatement would begin to resolve inconsistencies in research findings about the effects of organizational punishment. Ball *et al*. (1994, p. 299) noted, "Studies [of organizational punishment] have found positive, negative, and non-significant relationships, suggesting that important variables may be missing from our understanding of this common managerial behavior." Examples of these inconsistencies show the need to understand reinstatement. O'Reilly and Weitz (1980) found a positive correlation between a supervisor's unit performance rating and the use of sanctions. Beyer and Trice (1984), however, showed that while management discipline did influence subsequent behavior, this had minimal effect on actual performance. Podsakoff *et al*. (1982) found the same. Even more

concerning is Atwater *et al.* (2001) finding that, while disciplined individuals often change their behavior in the intended fashion, recipients and observers of organizational discipline may also lose respect for the disciplining manager and harbor negative feelings toward the organization. Similarly, Augustine-Adams (1998–1999) found that some members of a large Christian church returned to full activity and commitment after being reinstated, but others became hostile and actively sought to harm the organization.

A theory of reinstatement could resolve and explain these mixed findings in the organizational punishment literature. This assertion is based on the observation from criminal and legal philosophers that collectives (e.g., organizations, communities, countries) that focus solely on the act of punishment will continue to suffer the adverse effects of discipline, and receive only some of its potential benefits (e.g., Braithwaite 1989; Reitan 1996). This is because delinquent behavior and subsequent punishment tend to separate the offender from the collective in ways that stigmatize the offender, convincing the collective and the individual that change is impossible (Braithwaite 1989). As a result, offenders withdraw from the collective and become more inclined to indulge in their own delinquent behavior or at least less interested in benefiting the collective. In contrast, if the collective also attends to reinstatement when punishing an offender, stigma, withdrawal, and recidivism are all less likely (Braithwaite 1994; Braithwaite and Mugford 1994; Makkai and Braithwaite 1994).

Extending these observations to the organizational context, this paper contends that successful discipline needs to include an understanding of reinstatement. As in criminology and law, the results of punishment in organizations will be most beneficial when reinstatement is also addressed. Moreover, only by examining what occurs after punishment is complete can the disciplinary process be fully understood. As such, a theory of reinstatement would complement existing theories of punishment, and could provide the insight to resolve the seemingly conflicting findings about the effects of discipline.

To review, reinstatement is a process where a manager restores previously removed privileges. The addition of reinstatement to the conversation about discipline may clarify existing discrepancies in the research findings, and improve the practice of discipline in organizations. The first step in understanding reinstatement is examining the motivations for its occurrence, so as to know when and why it will occur. To that end, this paper adopts the framework of relationship repair as a theoretical lens for examining reinstatement.

Relationship Repair

This section reviews the research domain of relationship repair—as introduced by Dirks *et al.* (2009)—as a way to understand reinstatement. When an organizational member offends or commits a transgression against another, three events may occur, alone or in combination. These events are loss of trust between the parties (e.g., Gillespie and Dietz 2009), an increase of negative affect between the parties (e.g., Shapiro 1991), and the cease of positive exchange between the parties (e.g., Bottom *et al.* 2002). Relationship repair, therefore, is a process in which activities by one or both parties return the relationship to a positive state, by restoring one or more of trust, positive affect and exchange between parties (Dirks *et al.* 2009).

The reinstatement of privileges represents a process of relationship repair. Because of a transgression, a once positive relational state between the parties becomes negative. Punishment is applied and the offending party loses privileges. To regain the lost privileges, actions are taken to restore the prior positive relational state among the parties. As a final part of the relationship repair, the disciplined member's privileges are restored. For example, imagine an athlete caught using banned performance enhancing substances. As punishment, the athlete loses game playing time and is demoted from the position of captain. After appropriate reparations, including public apologies and remaining clean for a period of time, the athlete is reinstated to game play and to the position of captain. In this example, the trust and exchange aspects of the relationship are repaired. The athlete is permitted to resume play (positive exchange) and the coaches show their trust by restoring athlete to a leadership role, and a restoration of positive affect between coach and athlete may also follow. However, it is not necessary that all three of positive exchange, trust, and affect be restored for reinstatement to occur. For example, a worker may be terminated for misconduct, resulting in the loss of positive exchange (i.e., work for wages), interpersonal trust, and positive affect. If that worker is reinstated to the position through a union's threat to strike on his behalf, it may be that only positive exchange is restored. Management may continue to distrust the worker, and mutual negative affect may persist. Thus, while some instances of reinstatement repair all three elements of the relationship, this is not a requirement.

Dirks *et al*. (2009, p. 78) offer a four-phase process model for understanding how relationship repair occurs. Phase 1 is the initial state of trust, positive affect, and positive exchange between the parties before any transgression occurs. Phase 2 involves the perception of an act of transgression by one party. Phase 3 is the process of actually repairing the relationship. In Phase 3, the offender, the offended, or both attempt to repair the relationship so as to increase trust, restore positive affect, or resume positive exchange between the parties. Finally, Phase 4 is concerned with the state of trust, affect, and exchange after repair efforts are complete. Reinstatement is a part of the third phase in those cases where disciplinary action occurs. If the breach in Phase 2 leads to punishment of the offender, then the decision about whether and when to restore lost privileges (i.e., reinstatement) is an important part of the means by which the relationship between parties is restored. Reinstatement will also play a key role in determining the resumption of trust, positive affect, and positive exchange (Braithwaite 1994; Braithwaite and Mugford 1994; Makkai and Braithwaite 1994).

Three Bases for Relationship Repair

For a relationship to be repaired, at least one party involved must attempt to restore the positive relationship. Dirks *et al*. (2009) identify three broad categories of means by which such attempts can be made. These are the attributional, social equilibrium, and structural bases of relationship repair (Dirks *et al*. 2009). For simplicity, each of the three is discussed independently below, but in reality any or all may pertain simultaneously.

The first basis for relationship repair is causal attribution. One way to repair a relationship is to have the offended party acquire information or change perspective in such a way as to remove any negative perception of the offender (Rhee and Valdez 2009). In other words, a relationship can be repaired to the extent that the offended party attributes the wrong doing to some external, environmental factor rather than to the internal nature of the offender (Weiner 1979, 1985;

Weiner *et al*. 1971). Returning to the earlier example of the athlete punished for using banned substances, the relationship can be repaired if the athlete is able to convince the coach and athletic organization that the banned substance was used accidentally. For example, if it is shown that the substance was included in a food, but not labeled as an ingredient in that food, then the causal attribution for the wrongdoing may become external, as the fault of the food manufacturer, rather than the athlete. If this occurs, the athlete is absolved and the relationship is repaired on the basis of changed causal attributions.

The second basis, social equilibrium, uses explicit social rituals to repair the relationship (Ren and Gray 2009). For a discipline-worthy offense to be perceived as having occurred, some aspect of the relationship between parties must be perceived as being in disequilibrium; relevant norms of behavior or respect have been violated (Dirks *et al*. 2009). For example, if an employee is habitually late for work, that employee is violating the expected rules of interaction, and thereby damaging the relationship. Similarly, members of a Christian church may be perceived as violating normative rules when they commit prohibited or sinful actions. In these cases, inappropriate behavior has moved the relationships between parties into disequilibrium, and the means of repairing the relationship is reestablishing equilibrium through various social rituals (Goffman 1967). In the example of the Christian church, the offending individual may engage in appropriate acts of penance or contrition, and the church may redeem or otherwise restore the members to their standing (e.g., Augustine-Adams 1998–1999). Social equilibrium is restored through appropriate rituals that reconstitute the relationship between parties in response to the initial transgression.

The third basis in Dirks *et al*. (2009) paper involves changing the structure of the relationship so as to achieve repair. In this case, some aspects of the physical or social environment surrounding the relationship are changed to facilitate desired behavior and reduce the likelihood of undesirable behavior. For example, if a store cashier is caught stealing money, that cashier may be disciplined and granted a second chance, which involves reassignment to a position that does not involve handling money (Geller 1991). Structure-based relationship repair restores the positive relational state by providing assurances to both parties that the offending action will not occur again.

Fourth Basis for Relationship Repair: Power

Although Dirks *et al*. (2009, p. 82) mention the important role that power is likely to play in relationship repair, they do not develop that role. This is unfortunate, since power is a highly influential factor in shaping behavior in most organizational relationships (Kahn and Boulding 1964; Pfeffer 1997; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), and, as shall be discussed in the current paper, may be particularly important in reinstatement. As such, this paper extends the relationship repair framework by introducing power as a fourth basis for relationship repair. The understanding of power in this paper is based on the power-dependence literature (e.g., Emerson 1962; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), the neo-institutional literature (e.g., North 1990), and the stakeholder view of the firm (e.g., Freeman 1984).

Power is the ability of one party to influence the behavior and outcomes of another party, independent of the desires of the party being influenced (Ocasio 2002, p. 361). As a result, power

is derived from social relationships, and all social relationships involve some element of power (Emerson 1962). In organizations, power is typically exercised through the control of resources (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), and may be exerted directly upon the focal individual or indirectly through third parties (Brass 2005; North 1990). Employees pursuing arbitration to overturn a disciplinary action and have their privileges restored provide an example of the direct use of power (Gold *et al*. 1978). In contrast, mobilizing strikes and boycotts to regain privileges would involve the indirect use of power (Frooman 1999). In both cases, power, as the ability to coerce others, is used to restore the exchange relationship between two parties.

Seven Motivations for Reinstatement

Using the relationship repair framework, this section develops seven propositions about the motivations for managers to reinstate member privileges. The motivations are organized within the four bases of the framework, and each is introduced by a concrete example taken from either the academic or business press.

Attribution as a Basis for Reinstatement

The attributional basis of relationship repair is concerned with whether the offending behaviors are attributed to internal characteristics of the individual (e.g., integrity) or to external characteristics that are out of the control of the individual (e.g., mental illness or alcoholism'; Dirks *et al*. 2009). For reinstatement, a manger's attributions will influence beliefs about the likelihood of an offender's behavior changing or remaining the same, and thus the desirability of reinstatement. Take for example the following decision to reinstate a worker once the source of the transgression was discovered.

> "After Aquila Inc. fired meter reader Michael Combs for harassing a customer on company time … an arbitrator ordered him reinstated, reasoning that Aquila had failed to consider whether his bipolar disorder contributed to his misconduct. … [T]he arbitrator ruled, 'it cannot be concluded that the Company had just cause to terminate the Grievant's employment since it erred in treating the discharge solely as a disciplinary matter rather than a disability question.' The arbitrator conditioned Combs' reinstatement on medical documentation that he is continuing to take his medication and capable of returning to work. … In its motion [through court appeal] seeking to vacate the arbitration order, [Aquila] said that 'public policy cannot tolerate a second chance for Combs.' … 'considering the world in which we find ourselves, it flies against notions of common sense to reinstate an employee who criminally harassed a customer on Company time, in Company clothing, using a Company vehicle where there is—and cannot be—no guarantee such conduct will not recur'" (Margolies 2006).

As suggested by this example, recidivism can be a crucial consideration in reinstatement decisions; no manager wants to restore lost privileges, and then have the offender repeat the delinquent behavior. The desire to avoid recidivism makes causal attributions very important. Individuals assess others' behavior by attributing it to specific causes (Weary and Reich 2000), and the causes they choose define their expectancies about future behavior (Weiner *et al*. 1971). In reinstatement, the most important aspect of causal attribution is source stability, which refers

to the likelihood of the same cause being influential in the future (Weiner 1985). Unstable sources of behavior are unique and transient (Weiner 1979); they are not likely to recur (e.g., a family member's death, a serious traffic accident). In contrast, stable sources of behavior are those that are apt to be relevant again in the future (e.g., personality). Behaviors that are attributed to stable sources are viewed as more likely to be repeated (Weiner 1985). As such, if managers attribute the offender's problematic behavior to stable sources, they will expect recidivism, and be less likely to reinstate. Consistent with this reasoning, Carroll (1978) found that attributed causal stability influenced US Pennsylvanian Parole Board Members' expectations about recidivism in parole decision cases; parole was most likely to be granted when the board members attributed the offender's crime to unstable causes.

Proposition 1. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when the member's delinquent behavior is attributed to unstable causes.*

Social Equilibrium as a Basis for Reinstatement

The social equilibrium basis of relationship repair maintains that transgression involves the violation of social norms, and that reestablishing equilibrium requires appropriate courses of action related to those norms (Dirks *et al.* 2009). A norm is "a belief that a certain type of action must be performed … anytime a relevant type of circumstance gets validly instantiated" (Roversi 2005, p. 97). Considering reinstatement in terms of social equilibrium highlights two motivations: the dictates of norms themselves and the availability of procedures for reinstating privileges.

Norms of Forgiveness and Redemption

Norms are expressed in organizations through various behavioral practices, such as rituals (Arno 1976; Pratt 1981) and act as guides to appropriate behavior in particular circumstances (Lacey 2001; March and Olsen 2004). For example, Klaas and Wheeler (1990) found that managerial disciplinary practices were shaped by the desire to "adhere to institutionalized norms" (p. 119). Likewise, Klaas and Dell'omo (1997) demonstrated that organizational norms influenced whether managers used dismissal in response to poor work performance. In regards to reinstatement, consider the following ongoing debate concerning disbarred lawyers.

> "Readmission decisions [for disbarred and suspended lawyers] are cloaked in biblical professions of the importance of redemption … the theory of discipline is looking forward rather than backward. … If dangers to the public are gone, then [a disbarred lawyer] should get back in. … [Disbarred] lawyers shouldn't fare any worse than other criminals, who, once punished, have a right and obligation to proceed with their lives as productive members of society" (Davis 1996, p. A1).

The quote above demonstrates the potential influence of norms on reinstatement decisions. Of particular importance will be managers' perceptions of norms and behavioral expectations concerning forgiveness and redemption. As defined by Aquino *et al.* (2003), forgiveness occurs where a person "overcome[s] negative emotions toward his or her offender and … refrains from

causing the offender harm" (p. 212). Redemption is "the ability to overcome one's past mistakes or release oneself from blame" (Stone and Stone-Romero 1998, p. 49).

While organizational research on both of these normative behaviors is sparse (Bradfield and Aquino 1999), there is some anecdotal and empirical evidence suggesting that reinstating privileges can serve as a way of expressing norms of forgiveness and redemption. In Bottom *et al.* (2002) experiments, participants expressed forgiveness to former partners by restoring cooperation the opportunity to resume participation. Similarly Augustine-Adams (1998–1999), in reviewing disciplinary court procedures and cases in a large international Christian church, found beliefs in forgiveness and redemption expressed by the church by restoring privileges to members who had been judged as penitent. Thus, when there are norms of forgiveness, and associated rituals for reestablishing the social equilibrium, managers will be more likely to reinstate member privileges.

Proposition 2. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when relevant norms support forgiveness or redemption.*

Established Procedures

A primary function of formal rules and procedural norms is to reduce uncertainty about how to behave in a particular situation (Thompson 1967). In situations where one does not know what is expected, there is high uncertainty about what behavior is appropriate; individuals must individually determine what course of action to pursue (Goodrick and Salancik 1996; Weick 1995). A topical example is provided by an issue currently facing online social, networking organizations:

> Online social, networking organizations (e.g., MySpace and Facebook) have few established procedures for reinstating account privileges to members. Once privileges are removed it becomes very difficult for them to be returned because neither the member nor the companies have clearly established normative guidelines to follow (Abril and Cava 2008).

When confronted with uncertainty about how to act, individuals typically choose to do what is familiar and to maintain the status quo (Bazerman *et al.* 2001; Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988). In the context of reinstatement, this suggests that managers may be inclined against reinstatement if there are no established procedures available. If it is not clear what managers should do, the safest and preferable option may seem to be leaving the situation alone, letting the punishment stand (Hammond *et al.* 2006). Also, without clear procedures for reinstatement, the transgressor may be uncertain what action should be taken to repair the relationship.

Proposition 3. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when there are established procedures for doing so.*

Structure as a Basis for Reinstatement

Structural efforts at relationship repair tend to be most concerned with restoring positive exchange; it may be presumed that trust and positive affect will follow, but the structural changes are clearly focused on creating conditions for the resumption of exchange (Dirks *et al.* 2009). In this sense, structure-based reinstatement can be seen as the most self-interested or profit-maximizing, to the extent that it seeks to maximize the exchange-based benefits of a relationship with less emphasis on trust and affect. A manager's motivation to reinstate through structure thus derives primarily from relative costs and benefits of doing so. As an example, consider the reinstatement practices in Japanese communities.

> In Japanese hamlets—communities formally and hierarchically organized for economic, labor, and social support—households that break community rules are formally ostracized and the economic and social benefits provided by the hamlet are withdrawn. "[T]he maintenance of … formal [ostracism] places a strain upon the [Japanese] hamlet. … The presence in the midst of a hamlet of one ostracized household is at best an inconvenience. … [W]ith the loss of a household, many gaps appear in hamlet groupings, the youth clubs, the women's clubs, shrine groups, work gangs, and mutual labor groupings. … While it may be far from their thoughts at the time of expelling the offenders, the hamlet households … eventually begin to consider ways of healing the rupture in community relations … [through] the readmission of the household and its restoration to its former status" (Smith 1961, p. 528).

There may be times when a manager would choose not to reinstate a punished individual, but has little practical choice, as in the case of the Japanese hamlets. If it is more expensive to withhold privileges than to return them, there is a strong incentive for the manager to reinstate. In such cases, structural solutions become important, as managers forced to reinstate must structure the work environment in ways that reduce the likelihood of future problems. For example, Darmon (1990) found that terminating an employee typically entailed greater economic costs than benefits because of high costs associated with recruiting, selection, and training, and therefore suggested retraining and member development programs rather than termination. Similarly, Klaas and Wheeler (1990) found that employees' operational criticality and interchangeability were strong predictors of the punishment severity for poor performance; with greater criticality and lesser interchangeability, managers' punishments tended to be less severe. Extending these findings to reinstatement suggests that managers are more likely to reinstate privileges when doing so costs less than withholding them.

Proposition 4. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when the economic cost of not doing so is high.*

Power as a Basis for Reinstatement

The fourth basis of relationship repair concerns the use of power, typically in coercive or non-mutual routes to reinstatement. As with structure-based reinstatement, the emphasis in the use of one party's power may be more on exchange or one-sided gain, rather than restoring trust or positive affect. In cases of reinstatement, power may be exercised by either the punished individual or the manager, and recognizing this reveals three important potential sources of

motivation for reinstatement: regulatory mandate, stakeholder pressure, and organizational commitment.

Regulatory Mandate

> In December of 1960, a borough council found Carl Ehnis—a police chief in New Providence, New Jersey—guilty of misusing department funds. Ehnis was demoted from chief to sergeant. Ehnis appealed the decision to a county court where the judge found the demoted sergeant not guilty. The judge overturned the demotion and ordered Ehnis' immediate reinstatement as police chief (*New York Times* 1961). Carl Ehnis served thereafter as police chief in New Providence until his retirement in 1974 (http://www.nwprov.org/police).

All organizations are subject to the authority of some regulatory bodies (Gooderham *et al.* 1999), and those bodies often have the power to mandate reinstatement by threat of various economic and institutional penalties, such as fines or loss of license (Scott 2002; Strang and Sine 2001). In the above example, the judge represents an authorized regulatory agent that ordered the reinstatement of Ehnis' previous privileges of rank. The police borough acquiesced to this request because of the formal power represented and exerted by the judge. In an organizational context, hierarchical superiors are also a potential source of mandated reinstatement. If a middle manager who is against reinstating a particular employee's privileges is ordered to do so by senior executives, reinstatement becomes much more likely.

Proposition 5. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when authorized regulatory bodies direct them to do so.*

Stakeholder Pressure

> In December 1913, two railway workers were discharged for negligence while on the job. After a year of deliberation between the union and the railroad, there was a union-backed labor strike of 5,000 workers that paralyzed 600 miles of railroad line in New England. Within hours, without arbitration or legal action, the railroad reinstated the two men to full employment. The federal official who mediated the strike urged the railroad "in the interest of the public to accede to the [union's] request" and commented to the press "the strike was complete and the company had no alternative [but to reinstate the two men].'" (*New York Times* 1914, p. 1).

Powerful organizational stakeholders may motivate managers to reinstate privileges. The stakeholder perspective views organizations as open systems with varying degrees of dependence on internal and external parties (Freeman 1984; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Groups such as employees, suppliers, and investors provide essential resources to organizations, so managers may select courses of action that satisfy the implied or expressed desires of those groups (Agle *et al.* 1999). While different stakeholder groups have varying degrees of institutional legitimacy (Mitchell *et al.* 1997), they often attempt to influence organizational behavior (Hendry 2005). To the extent that a stakeholder group can control essential resources, they will gain influence over organizational actions (Frooman 1999). This is illustrated in the

example above, in which a labor union, despite the lack of any formal or legal mandate, exerted sufficient influence to have employees reinstated. Thus, managers may reinstate privileges to appease powerful stakeholders.

Proposition 6. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when powerful stakeholders pressure them to do so.*

Organizational Commitment

While the previous two motivations involved the disciplined using power to regain privileges, it is important to remember that in many cases, it is the manager who has greater power, and managers may make intentional use of that power to further their ends. Managers can have their own reasons for reinstating, and chief among these is the effect that reinstatement can have in creating highly committed employees. Committed, loyal employees have always been an important source of organizational performance, and this seems to be increasingly true with the shift to expert-based knowledge work and more complex work structures (Hackman and Oldham 1976; Sturges *et al.* 2002). Related to this, evidence suggests that managers may use their power to reinstate as a means of fostering loyalty.

> "For aberrant members of the Church to lose its privileges and blessings may cause them to appreciate more what they have lost. The feeling of aloneness and of not belonging stirs them to repentance and increased faithfulness" (Stapley 1963, p. 36–37).

As this example highlights, reinstatement can have profound effects on the individual reinstated. Recognizing this, some managers may choose to use reinstatement as means to producing those effects. Adler and Adler (1988) provide an example of such behavior in their study of intense loyalty formation (also see Goldner 1965 for a comparable example in a manufacturing context). They describe how a college basketball coach's use harsh public punishments and difficult processes of reinstatement created great loyalty and commitment among players. Consistent with this, research in ostracism has found that allowing previously ostracized individuals to return to the group increases group cohesiveness (Williams 2001), and social dilemma researchers have shown that readmission can boost group performance (Cinyabuguma *et al.* 2005; Masclet 2003; Ouwerkerk 2003). A variety of social and psychological mechanisms presumably underlie these effects, including dissonance reduction (Aronson 1992), responses to control deprivation (Greenberger and Strasser 1986), and motivational efficacy (Hall and Isabella 1985). However, with regard to reinstatement, two points seem clear: reinstatement can increase member commitment, and managers may use reinstatement intentionally for this purpose.

Proposition 7. *Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when they desire increased organizational commitment.*

Discussion and Conclusion

Organizational discipline is usually treated as a two-act play. The first act is the punishment; privileges are removed from the delinquent member. The second act involves reactions to the punishment, including the emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of the disciplining manager, the

punished individual, and witnesses. Current theories of discipline in organizations stop at this point. However, as explained above, there are actually three acts. The third and final part of the discipline process is the possible reinstatement of lost privileges. This paper adopted relationship repair as a lens to bring the topic of reinstatement into the conversation about organizational discipline and to provide a foundation for future theoretical development.

A coherent theory of reinstatement could resolve existing ambiguity about the effects of discipline in organizations. At the simplest level, understanding reinstatement could clarify why punishment sometimes produces more harm than good. In general, theories of discipline predict that the right punishment will produce mostly beneficial results. Sometimes it does, and these may be the instances where reinstatement would have been unnecessary or even inappropriate. In contrast, for cases where punishment causes more harm than good, the explanation may be a lack of reinstatement. At a minimum, reinstatement can help us to ask better questions about the complex effects of discipline in organizations.

As demonstrated by this paper, a better understanding of reinstatement would also contribute to knowledge about the broader domain of relationship repair. Even the initial work done in this paper provides useful insight. Although Dirks *et al*. (2009) mentioned power in passing, they did not develop its role as a potential basis for relationship repair. In contrast, viewing reinstatement as an instance of relationship repair highlighted the importance of power. Reinstatement often involves the exercise of power. The addition of this fourth basis for relationship repair begins to acknowledge the central role of power in organizational behavior, and thereby expands the domain.

However, this paper is only a beginning; much work remains before a coherent theory of reinstatement will be reached. Explications of the processes, techniques, experiences, and effects of reinstatement need to be developed and investigated. These are beyond the scope of this paper, but the motivations provided here can serve as the foundation for the next steps in developing the theory. For one, the motivations for reinstating privileges suggest likely sites for observing the practice. For example, the relative costs motivation suggests comparing industries with chronic labor shortages to those with surplus workers. Likewise, organizations with a need for highly committed members could usefully be contrasted with those that have little need for loyalty.

As well, distinguishing the different motivations for reinstatement can help to clarify differences in the processes and results of reinstatement. Anecdotal evidence already suggests that the motivations and methods of reinstatement may be as important as the actual privileges that are restored. Jones' (1961) case study of two organizations' reinstatement practices offers a good example. One organization went to great lengths to demonstrate their interest in the employee being reinstated (e.g., personal consultations, lengthy explanations, provisions of action options), while the other organization displayed no such interest (e.g., reinstated employees only learned of their reinstatement from coworkers). These two processes seem likely to generate very different results, and one can imagine how each process is associated with a different motivation.

Beyond reinstatement per se, this paper also extends the larger domain of relationship repair by adding an additional basis for achieving repair. Dirks *et al*. (2009) noted that the different routes

to relationship repair likely interact in various ways that facilitate or hinder the process. Recognizing the role of power in relationship repair enriches the possibilities of these interactions. For example, if power and attributional routes were simultaneously pursued to repair a particular relationship, the use of power might undermine any attributional benefit to trust or affect. Coercing someone to take a course of action creates a greater likelihood of offenders perceiving themselves as losing control, potentially leading to even further losses in trust and positive affect, rather than gains. The relationship repair domain is quite new, but certainly seems to hold great promise for understanding interpersonal dynamics in organizations particularly if it incorporates the ubiquitous role of power in organizations.

This paper ends as it began, stressing that reinstatement occurs often, in all kinds of organizations, and at every level within them. Profit and nonprofit organizations are facing the challenges of reinstatement, as are military, sport, religious, and professional organizations. In all cases, reinstatement can have extensive consequences for the people involved, for the organization, and for society at large. The need for a theory of reinstatement is apparent.

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