

Why do managers reinstate member privileges in organizations? Six motivations

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Runninghead: Six Motivations for Reinstatement

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Abstract

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Keywords: Reinstatement, employee discipline, organizational punishment, intra-organizational relations

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1. 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. It is not clear why these surgical privileges were taken away, but following numerous petitions from patients, their families, 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 had previously taken away. Reinstatement occurs in many kinds of organizational setting (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 & 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 In a memorable historical example, more than 5,000 maintenance workers had their termination rescinded after wage disputes were settled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 admonition from scholars (e.g., Jones, 1965; McDermott & Newham, 1971), there is very little research on reinstatement. As such, the purpose of this paper is to begin filling this void. The discussion below provides a preliminary foundation for the study of reinstatement by considering what conditions would induce managers to reinstate previously removed privileges.

This paper begins by reviewing relevant theory on discipline and punishment from organizational behavior, human resource management, industrial labor relations, and social psychology. With this background, reinstatement is defined and its importance to organizational behavior theory and practice is discussed. To provide a base whereby future research may be built, six motivations about when organizations will reinstate member privileges are then derived. This paper concludes with a discussion of potential directions for future research on reinstatement in organizations.

2. Discipline in Organizations: A Brief Review

While little has been said about reinstatement, there has been considerable discussion of its antecedent, punishment (Arvey & Ivanevich, 1980; Trevino & Weaver, 1998). In reviewing this body of work, the authors are not aware of any approaches to discipline that address reinstatement explicitly, however they do provide a basis from which a discussion of reinstatement may begin. As a preface to this review, it should be noted that this paper treats discipline and punishment as synonyms, which is consistent with the practice of others in the field (Arvey & Jones, 1985).

2.1. Definition and Function of Discipline in Organizations

Discipline is defined by Trevino (1992) as “the manager’s application of a negative consequence or withdrawal of a positive consequence from someone under his or her supervision” (p. 649). Discipline can take two forms: imposing a penalty (e.g., fines, scolding) or removing a benefit (e.g., lost promotion, salary reduction) (Arvey & Ivanevich, 1980). The latter form, removing privileges, is the necessary precondition for reinstatement.

In organizations, discipline serves a controlling function (Arvey & Jones, 1985). Punishments can have direct effects by discouraging an offender from repeating a behavior (Beyer & Trice, 1984; Fairhurst, Golen, & Snively, 1985). They can also have indirect effects by signaling to others which behaviors are inappropriate, and thereby establishing rules and norms (Arvey & Ivanevich, 1980; Bandura, 1977; Black, 1980; O’Reilly & Weitz, 1980). Discipline can reinforce hierarchical power dynamics and maintain supervisory control over subordinates (Goldner, 1965). A vivid example of such control is given by Adler and Adler’s (1988) case study of a college basketball team. The team’s head coach punished players publicly to demonstrate his power over them, to maintain social distance, and to make it apparent who was in charge. Some social groups and organizations take the control function of discipline to the extreme, using techniques such as hazing and indoctrination to appear to have complete control over individual members (de Albuquerque & Paes-Machado, 2004; Zurcher, 1967).

2.2. Theoretical Approaches to Discipline in Organizations

Discipline in organizations has been examined with a variety of approaches, and each of these approaches focuses on different elements of the discipline process. The behaviorist approach focuses on the techniques of administering discipline (Church, 1963; Skinner, 1953; Solomon, 1964), and is primarily concerned with understanding how to change behavior by selecting the “right” punishment (Beyer & Trice, 1984; Trevino & Weaver, 1998; Wheeler, 1976). A representative example of this approach is the human resource management tradition of progressive discipline, which views discipline as a process of managers using “a set of hammers ... to pound out the problematic [member] behavior” (Kulik, 2004, p. 163). Similarly, positive discipline is concerned with the best series of progressive steps for changing an offender’s behavior (Black, 1980; Campbell, Fleming, & Grote, 1985; Huberman, 1964, 1975). Thus, the focus of the behaviorist approach is on determining the best punishment to change some target behavior (Arvey & Ivanevich, 1980; Kulik, 2004). These theories stop at the point of successful implementation, saying nothing about reinstatement at all.

An alternative way of understanding discipline is the normative approach, which is most focused on the cognitive and emotional experiences of the discipliner, the disciplined, and the witnesses of discipline (Treviño & Weaver, 1998). Drawing from theories of justice, scholars using the normative approach are concerned less about how to punish and more interested in how people react to implementing, receiving, or witnessing disciplinary action (e.g., Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1993; Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994; Butterfield, Trevino, & Ball, 1996; Trevino, 1992). Thus, while behaviorists focus on the discipline and its behavioral effects, normativists focus on the effects discipline in

terms of thoughts and feelings. The normative approach extends theories of discipline by considering how people directly or indirectly respond to discipline, but this approach is similar to the behavioral one in stopping short of addressing reinstatement. The punishment and its many effects are considered, but the subsequent actions of the organization are not.

A third approach focuses on the rehabilitation of the disciplined member. This approach builds on the progressive and positive discipline literatures to begin looking at post-punishment aspects of the discipline process. This rehabilitation or “constructive intervention” approach goes beyond the behaviorist and normative approaches by considering what actions to take after punishment ends (Trice, 1990). As such, this approach comes closest to reinstatement, but does not actually address it. The prevailing perspective in this approach is to focus on “troubled employees” who are suffering from various personal problems (e.g., substance abuse, emotional trauma, stress) and advocate for the use of programs to help employees address their problems (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous; see Johnson, 1985). Employees are thus viewed as sick individuals in need of treatment, and the organization is held at least partially responsible for addressing the sickness (Bacharach, Bamberger, & McKinney, 2000; Bennett, Blum, & Roman, 1994; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Milne, Blum, & Roman, 1994; Spell & Blum, 2005). Therefore, while this approach focuses on the treatment of the member after punishment has been administered, it does so by focusing on the member as an isolated individual, rather than as a part of the organization. The emphasis is on fixing the individuals’ idiosyncratic problems, rather than on the process of reinstating and reintegrating the individual to their former status within the organization.

Taken together, these approaches reveal much about when, why, and how organizations take privileges from members, how privilege removal affects managers and subordinates, and how managers and staff can work with troubled individuals to address their personal problems (McAfee & Champagne, 1994). However, the topic of the reinstating privileges is all but ignored. It seems to be assumed that removed privileges will either never be reinstated, or that reinstating them is so straightforward that no consideration is needed.

3. Reinstatement: Definition and Relevance

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

3.1. 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 who possesses the authority to remove and reinstate organizational privileges. This would include 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.

Our conceptualization of reinstatement departs from traditional scholarship on the process in one important way. Whereas past research on reinstatement typically views

the process as occurring only in the event of membership termination or suspension (e.g., Bakirci, 2004; McDermott & Newham, 1971), we allow a more broad application of the phenomenon to include the restoring of any privilege that is an appendage to being a member of an organization. Relaxing the bounds of how reinstatement traditionally is discussed highlights that reinstatement occurs in a variety of organizational contexts and settings other than those traditionally discussed among organizational scholars; e.g., public and government organizations (e.g., police, military, schools). These other organizational contexts include private organizations (e.g., churches, clubs, sport teams) and professions (e.g., law and medicine).

This 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 returning to a formerly lost rank). 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, Knetsch, & Thaler, 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 (e.g., Van Boven, Dunning, & Loewenstein, 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 or violated expectations. This will increase the potential emotionality of the situation for

both the manager and the recipient, reinforcing the difference between reinstatement and the initial giving of privileges (e.g., Luce, Bettman, & Payne, 1997).

This paper's definition of reinstatement refers to individuals, but is not restricted to single persons. A collective may also be reinstated. For example, the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity organization had its pledging privileges reinstated after losing them for participating in illegal hazing activities (Maughan, 2003, September 12). Similarly, three American universities which lost the privilege to conduct research after a suspension by federal mandate subsequently had these privileges reinstated (Sciarra, 1999, September 29). However, for the sake of clarity and brevity, this paper refers 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 lost privileges, and whether it is appropriate to reinstate privileges. Obviously, all of these are important issues, and must be addressed in the process of developing a complete theory of reinstatement. However, as noted in the review above, there is no existing theory about reinstatement in organizations. As such, this paper begins at the beginning, by seeking to understand the motivations for reinstating privileges. Moreover, evidence from the study of social reintegration of criminals suggests that the motivations for reinstatement are one of the most important aspects of the punishment process (Braithwaite, 1989). Motivations are therefore the essential foundation for further research, as they can clarify when and why reinstatement will occur.

3.2. The Need for a Study of Reinstatement in Organizations

From a practical perspective, privilege reinstatement is a vitally important issue, with potentially significant effects on the recipient, the manager, other organization members, the organization as a whole, and even the 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 and suspended attorneys are reinstated every year (Levine, 1998). However, many legal scholars and concerned officials are dissatisfied with current state policies for this process (Lacey, 2001). In large part, this dissatisfaction reflects disagreement about whether and why lawyers should be reinstated, with some maintaining against any chance of reinstatement and others making a case for redemption (Rotunda & Johnson, 1994). At present, there is no accepted theoretical logic or established process in this regard, and one reason for this is lack of consensus about the appropriate motivations for reinstating lawyers (e.g., Davis, 1996, Levine, 1998; Rotunda & Johnson, 1994). The result is that many legal scholars and professionals are concerned about the integrity and image of their entire profession (Rotunda & Johnson, 1994; also see Grant & Alfred, 2007 for a 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 irrelevant as its 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 & 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 organizational behavior theory. The most obvious of these is parsimony through the integration of several disparate literatures. Reinstatement can encompass related social phenomena, such as

reinstatement through arbitration, relenting after social ostracism, reintegration after communal and institutional punishment, and the readmission of individuals in mixed-motive gaming contexts (e.g., Bamberger & Donahue, 1999; Braithwaite, 1989; Cinyabuguma, Page, & Putterman, 2005; Lacey, 2001; Masclet, 2003; Ouwerkerk, 2003; Reitan, 1996; Smith, 1961; Williams, 2007). A theory of reinstatement in organizations could integrate these disparate findings into a single framework.

In addition, a theory of reinstatement would resolve existing inconsistencies in research findings about the effects of organizational punishment. Ball and colleagues (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 their use of sanctions. Beyer and Trice (1984), however, showed that management discipline did influence subsequent behavior, but that this had minimal effect on actual performance. Podsakoff, Todor, and Skov (1982) found the same. Even more concerning is Atwater and colleagues’ (2001) finding that, while they 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.

Such poor results from discipline may be explained by relevant findings in criminal studies. As noted previously, the theory and practice of discipline in organizations has addressed the antecedents, processes, and consequences of punishment, but gone no further. Criminal and legal philosophers observe that collectives (e.g., organizations, communities, countries) that focus solely on 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 punishment, as a consequence, tends to separate the offender from the collective in a way that stigmatizes 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 punishes and then formally reintegrates the offender, stigma, withdrawal, and recidivism are all less likely (Braithwaite, 1994; Braithwaite & Mugford, 1994; Makkai & Braithwaite, 1994).

These findings suggest that a theory of reinstatement is the key to understanding the mixed effects of discipline in organizations, and to improving its practice. While some have suggested that punishment in organizations does not work as intended and so should be avoided (Huberman, 1964, 1975; Skinner, 1953), evidence suggests that some punishment is an inevitable necessity in organizations (Arvey & Ivanevich, 1980; Black, 1970). Given this, some solution is needed, and this paper contends that a comprehensive understanding of reinstatement must be part of that solution. Only by examining the actions and processes required once punishment is complete can the disciplinary process be clarified. A theory of reinstatement would complement existing theories of

punishment, and provide a complete picture, resolving seemingly conflicting findings regarding the effects of discipline.

4.1. Six Motivations for Reinstatement

In this section, several disparate research traditions are integrated to derive six motivations for managers to reinstate member privileges. Anecdotes and statements from managers from the public press, case studies, or public organizational documents are used to provide an example of these motivations.

4.1.1. 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. The result was the demotion of Ehnis 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, April 20). Carl Ehnis served thereafter as police chief in New Providence until his retirement in 1974

(<http://www.nwprov.org/police>).

The most obvious motivation for a manager to reinstate a member's privileges is compulsion through regulatory mandate; e.g., judge or third-party arbitrator. All organizations are subject to the authority of some regulatory bodies (Gooderham, Nordhaug, & Ringdal, 1999), and those bodies often have the power to mandate reinstatement through various economic and institutional penalties, such as fines or loss of license (Scott, 2002; Strang & 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. Thus,

Proposition 1: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when authorized regulatory bodies pressure them to do so.

4.1.2. Relative Costs

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).

The experiences of these Japanese hamlets illustrate how reinstatement is more likely when it is expensive or inconvenient to maintain punishment. If it is more expensive to withhold privileges than to return them, there is a strong incentive for the manager to reinstate. This issue can particularly important in cases of termination and membership reinstatement. 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 new employees. Darmon (1990) suggested retraining and member development programs to avoid the high costs of turnover. Similarly, Klaas and Wheeler (1990) found that an employee's operational criticality and fungibility were strong predictors of the punishment severity for poor performance; with greater criticality and lesser fungibility, managers were more likely to remove lesser privileges. This observation is extended to reinstatement, positing that managers are more likely to reinstate privileges when doing so costs less than withholding them.

Proposition 2: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when the economic cost of not doing so is high.

4.1.3. 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, January 20).

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 &

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, Mitchell, & Sonnerfeld, 1999). While stakeholder groups have varying degrees of institutional legitimacy (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 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 3: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when powerful stakeholders pressure them to do so.

4.1.4. Norms

“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. While norms may be defined in various ways (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991), this paper defines a norm as “a motive of behavior ... a belief that a certain type of action must be performed ... anytime a relevant type of circumstance gets validly instantiated” (Roversi, 2005, p. 97). In other words, norms – by this definition – are

beliefs that act as guides to appropriate behavior (Lacey, 2001; March & Olsen, 2004). Consistent with this, norms influence behavior and are expressed in organizations through outward actions such as rituals and other human behavioral practices (Arno, 1976; Pratt, 1981). For example, Klaas and Wheeler (1990, p. 119) found managerial disciplinary practices were shaped by the desire to “adhere to institutionalized norms.” Likewise, Klaas and Dell’omo (1997) demonstrated that organizational norms influenced whether managers used dismissal in response to poor work performance.

Two norms that influence a manager’s likelihood to reinstate privileges are forgiveness and redemption. As defined by Aquino, Grove, Goldman, and Folger (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 & Stone-Romero, 1998, p. 49). While organization research on both of these normative behaviors is sparse (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), there is some anecdotal and empirical evidence suggesting that reinstating privileges is a way of expressing the norms of forgiveness and redemption. In Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, and Murnighan’s (2002) experiments of a repeated-prisoners’ dilemma game, participants expressed forgiveness to (once non-cooperative but now cooperative) partners by unilaterally cooperating and restoring their partner once again with the monetary benefits of mutual cooperation. Augustine-Adams (1998-1999), in reviewing disciplinary court procedures and cases in a large international Christian church, found beliefs in forgiveness and redemption to be expressed through the church by giving back privileges (such as membership, priesthood offices, and blessings from ordinances) to members who had been judged as penitent. These findings

coupled with the expression of norms through behavioral action suggest the following proposition.

Proposition 4: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when relevant norms support forgiveness or redemption.

4.1.5. Desire for Organizational Commitment

“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).

The preceding motivations for reinstatement have been primarily external, concerning various pressures exerted on the reinstating manager. However, management may have its own reasons for reinstating, and chief among these is the desire for 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 & Oldham, 1976; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002). Evidence suggests that reinstatement is a potentially effective means of fostering loyalty.

Adler and Adler (1988) provide the classic example of this reinstatement effect in their study of intense loyalty formation (but 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, Page, & Putterman, 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 & Strasser, 1986), and motivational efficacy (Hall & Isabella, 1985). However, with regard to reinstatement, two points seem clear: reinstatement can increase member commitment, and at least some managers use reinstatement intentionally for this purpose.

Proposition 5: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when they desire increased organizational commitment.

4.1.6. Instability of Attributed Cause

“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).

Recidivism is a crucial consideration in reinstatement decisions. No manager wants to reverse a punishment, restore lost privileges, and then have the offender repeat the delinquent behavior. This makes causal attributions important. Individuals assess others' behavior by attributing it to specific causes (Weary & Reich, 2000), and the causes they choose create expectancies about future behavior (Weiner et al., 1971). In reinstatement, the most important aspect of this attribution process 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 (unchanging) causal sources are viewed as more likely to be repeated (Weiner, 1985). As such, if managers attribute the offender's delinquent 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 Pennsylvania Parole Board Members' expectations about recidivism in parole decision cases; parole was most likely granted when the parole board attributed the offender's crime to unstable sources.

Proposition 6: Managers are more likely to reinstate member privileges when the member's delinquent behavior is attributed to unstable causes.

5. Discussion

Organizational discipline is typically viewed 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 maintained above, there are actually three acts, with the third and final part of the process being the possible reinstatement of lost privileges.

A coherent theory of reinstatement would resolve the ambiguity in current research findings 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 be 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.

In taking the initial steps toward a theory of reinstatement, this paper highlighted the importance of the topic, so that it can attract the scholarly attention it deserves.

Reinstatement was also defined as the restoration of previously removed organizational privileges, a definition which can facilitate the integration of several related, and currently disconnected, research traditions. Working with this definition, the integration of existing theory helped derive six distinct motivations for managers to reinstate privileges.

Because this paper is only a beginning, much work remains. Explications of the processes, techniques, experiences, and effects of reinstatement need to be developed and investigated. These were beyond the scope of this paper, but the motivations provided here can serve as a foundation for the next steps in researching reinstatement. 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, recognizing 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 what specific privileges 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.

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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