

# The Meaninglessness of Organizational Culture

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## Why

- Much of the corporate world is fixated on the concept of organizational culture
- In academia alone there are 4,664<sup>1</sup> articles and 164<sup>2</sup> definitions

I hypothesize that the prominence of the topic is a result of employees' basic order **needs** and resulting **motivation** for acceptance; while the organization is driven by a desire to regulate **behavior**.

As a result, the term is ultimately rendered **meaningless** and what's left is a question of what a **better alternative** might look like.

## How

### Extensive research and analysis of...

- 12 online articles and resources
- 10 academic books
- 9 scholarly papers and journals
- 3 well known organizations

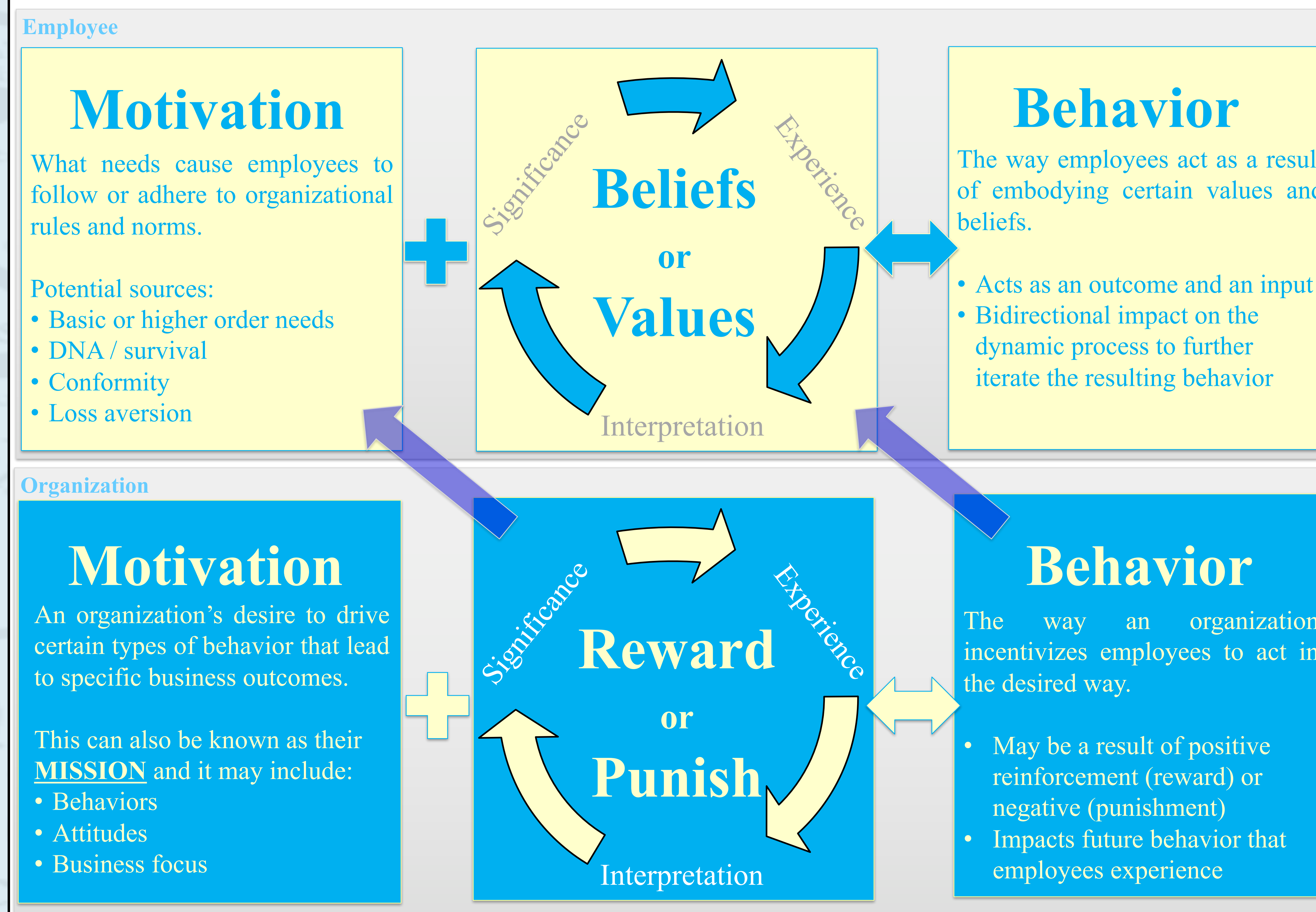
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### ...was done to:

- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing academic theories
- Evaluate social behavior theories to account for the roles of behavior and motivation
- Apply the analyses to existing companies

## What

### A New Model for Defining Organizational Culture:



## Citations

- <sup>1</sup><http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>  
<sup>2</sup>Sathe, V. "Implications of corporate culture: A manager's guide to action." *Organizational Dynamics*, 12(2), 1983, pp. 5-23.

## Gratitude

I would not have made it to this point without my husband, Paul Knepper's unwavering love and support; my son Brodie, being the best baby; the patience and encouragement of my family, friends and colleagues; the comradery of my cohort; and guidance of my HDO advisor, John Traphagan.

## So...

### Organizational culture:

- Fundamentally exists to drive a type of behavior that yields specific desired organizational outcomes
  - This purpose is sometimes obscured by inconsistency of the term's meaning
- Has three components:
  1. Motivation
  2. A dynamic process of social construction whereby experiences are interpreted and then given significance
  3. Drives and is driven by behavior

**These components have both independent and co-constructed impact and application for the employees and the organization:**

### 1. Motivation

- Employees are motivated by need for belonging
- Organizations are motivated by desired outcomes (also known as their Mission)

### 2. The social construction process

- Involves beliefs or values for employees; reward or punishment for the organization
- Is used to drive desired behavior and in both cases has a recursive relationship with the resulting and evolving behavior

### 3. Behavior

- Ultimately ties back to meeting the original motivation
- Impacted by ongoing employee experiences

### A better way forward:

- One unified definition of organizational culture:  
**An organization has a mission that is tied to an incentive structure that supports behaviors to achieve that mission, as well as meet employee needs/motivation:**

