

- **Stories** told by members of the organisation that embed the present and flag up important events and personalities, and typically have to do with successes, failures, heroes, villains and mavericks.
- **Symbols** – such as logos, offices, cars, titles, type of language or terminology commonly used – which become a shorthand representation of the nature of the organisation.
- **Power structures** – power of the most powerful individuals or groups in the organisation may be based on management position and seniority, but in some organisations power can be lodged with other levels or functions.
- **Control systems** – measurement and reward systems that emphasise what it is important to monitor, and to focus attention and activity upon – for example, stewardship of funds or quality of service.
- **Organisation structure** – which reflects power structures and delineates important relationships and activities within the organisation, and involves both formal structure and control and less formal systems.
- **The paradigm of the organisation**, which encapsulates and reinforces the behaviours observed in other elements of the cultural web.¹⁶

Culture and organisation control

A number of writers have referred to an alternative view of culture as a means of organisational control. For example, *Cartwright* sees culture as a system of management authority. When accepted by employees, cultural values increase the power and authority of management in three ways. Employees:

- identify themselves with their organisation and accept its rules when 'it is the right thing to do';
- internalise the organisation's values when they believe they are right; and
- are motivated to achieve the organisation's objectives.¹⁷

Egan refers to culture as the largest organisational control system that dictates how crazy or idiosyncratic people can be. Companies and institutions have both an overt and covert culture that influences both business and organisational behaviour.

The covert set can be quite dysfunctional and costly, and the largest and most controlling. It affects not only overt organisational behaviour but also the shadow-side behaviour. There may be no published rule, but culture still lays down norms for the social system. Culture tells the kind of politics allowed and how employees are allowed to play the political game.¹⁸

Watson refers to the cultural design of an organisation and the link between direct and indirect controls. In a highly centralised organisation with a tight bureaucratic structure and culture there would be an emphasis on direct controls with prescribed rules and procedures, and a low level of psychological commitment from employees. In a less centralised organisation with a loosely bureaucratic structure and culture there would be more attention to indirect controls with relatively loose rules and procedures, greater flexibility and discretion, and a culture of high level commitment.¹⁹ **See also organisation control in Chapter 14.**