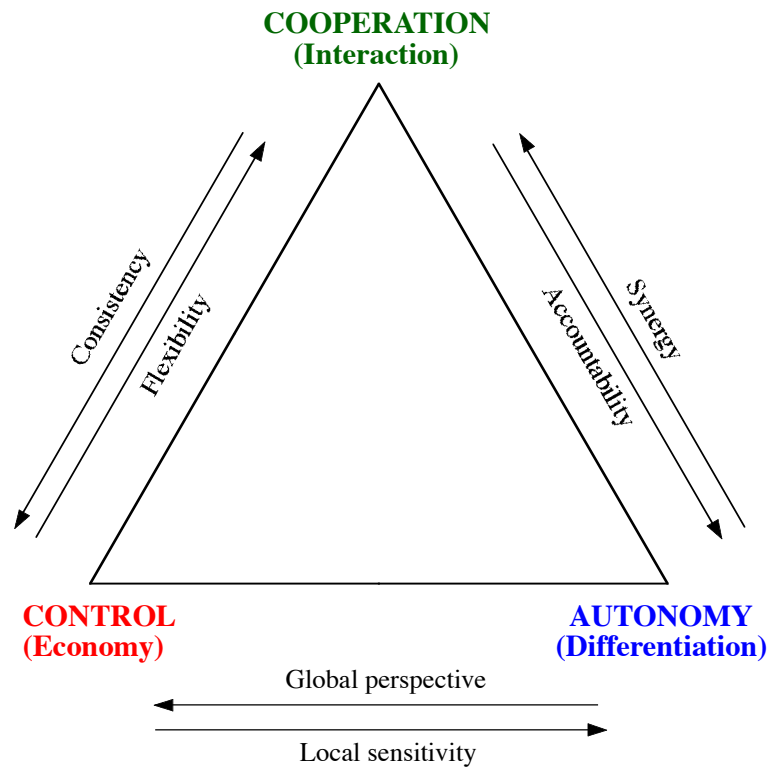


ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY TRADEOFFS



Organizational strategy is a three-way tradeoff. Autonomy versus control is the classic field-versus-headquarters dilemma: nitty-gritty versus big-picture. Those in the field are “where the rubber meets the road,” as the famous tire commercial used to put it. They are in touch with customer needs and geographical nuances in a way that remote corporate managers and staffers rarely can be. What field personnel tend to lack, however, is a view of the whole.

Control versus cooperation is tantamount to consistency versus flexibility--uniformity versus plasticity. In ecological terms, the contrast is between adaptation and adaptability. Adaptation is fineness of fit with a particular (kind of) environmental niche; adaptability is the capacity to adjust to new environments.

Autonomy versus cooperation is equivalent to accountability versus synergy--the individual versus the collective. The more that an organization stresses individual or unit accountability, the less likely it is to benefit from voluntary cooperation among individuals or units. Conversely, the greater the commitment to synergy, the more difficult it is to sort out each player's contribution.