transparadox

transcending the paradoxical effects of big data.

In 2018, both Airbnb and Uber outperformed champions of their respective industries. What is most surprising about these companies is that Airbnb owns no property and Uber owns no vehicles. Yet, Airbnb has nearly as many listings as Marriott International (if you account for the listings that are available; counting listings that are not available they have more by a factor of 3) and Uber boasts over 10 billion rides to date.

Other tendencies, like predatory exploitation of user data, large scale data breaches and unchecked surveillance makes it appear that this surge of prosperity is potentially moving wayward. Without appropriate intervention to offset the power of these organizations they are abound for the potential to corral resources and power into corporations.

This document highlights three paradoxes related to privacy, identity and power at the heart of big data which outline key moments of tension, with the hope that through critical engagement, space will emerge to craft solutions to offset the hazards.

PROJECT FOCUS

Explore areas of tension related to big data and how we might use them to develop a framework to offset negative trends that are emerging and increase consumer trust.

METHODS

Theme matrix analysis
Secondary literature review
Semiotic square analysis

TOOLS

Excel – data preperation / analysis
InDesign – visual design

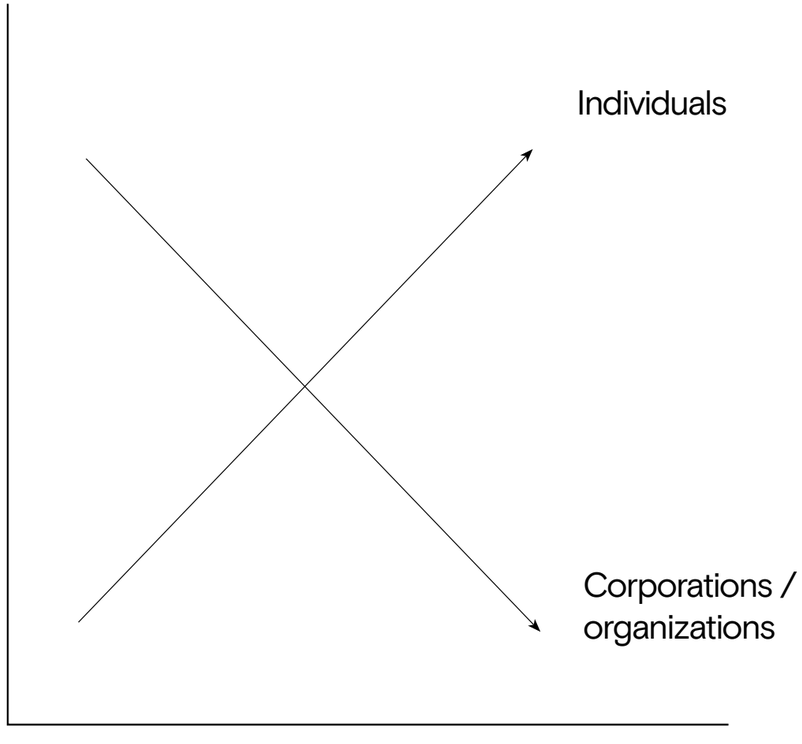
transparency paradox

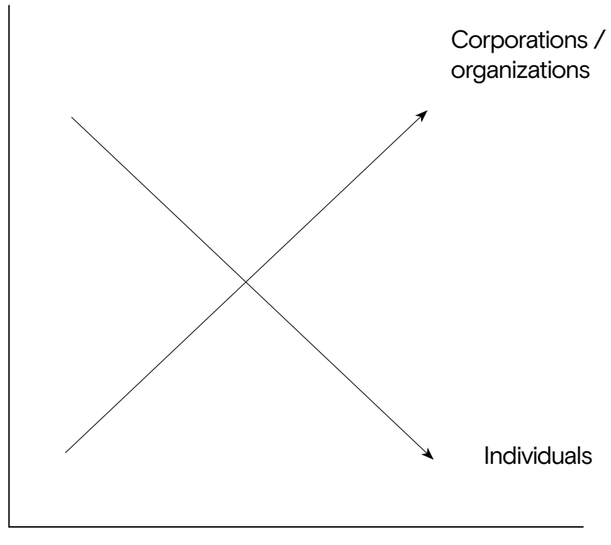
The promise is to use data to make the world more transparent, but its collection is invisible, and its tools and techniques are opaque, shrouded by layers of physical, legal, and technical privacy by design. If big data spells the end of privacy, then why is the big data revolution occurring mostly in secret? [1]

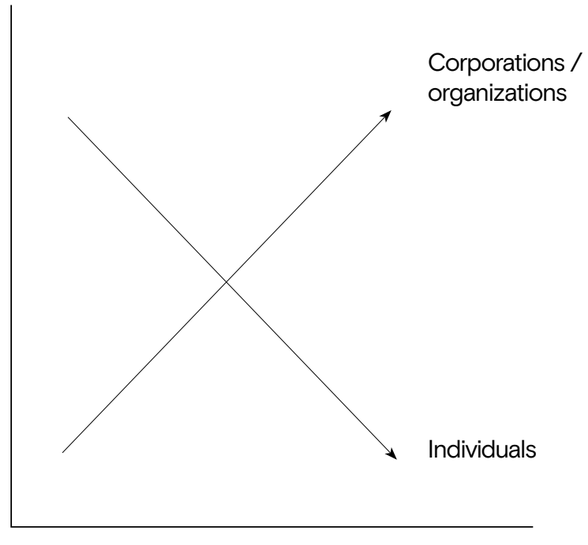
This space of tension can benefit from cross disciplinary interventions.

We cannot have a system, or even the appearance of a system, where surveillance is secret,[3] or where decisions are made about individuals by a Kafkaesque system of opaque and unreviewable decisionmakers. [4]

Pervasive collection of private information and the operations of big data itself are almost entirely shrouded in legal and commercial secrecy. [1]



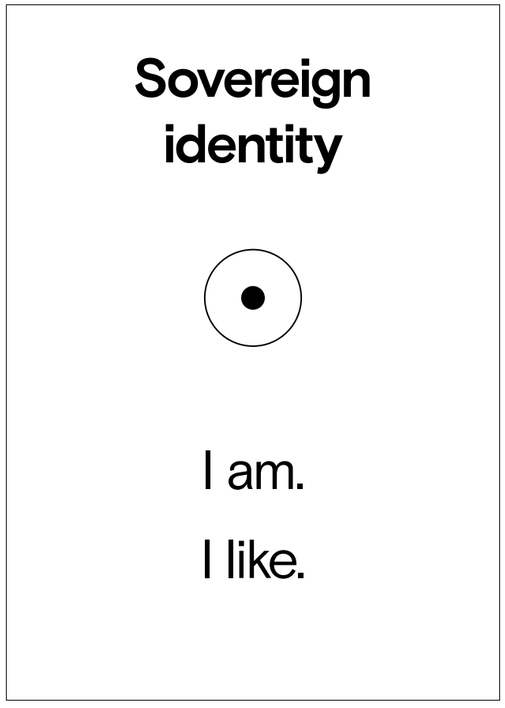




identity paradox

We instinctively desire sovereignty over our personal identity. Whereas the important right to privacy harkens from the right to be left alone, the right to identity originates from the right to free choice about who we are. [1]

Big data seeks to identify, but it also threatens identity.



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Liberal notions of control

Autonomy

Control

Authoritarian notions of control

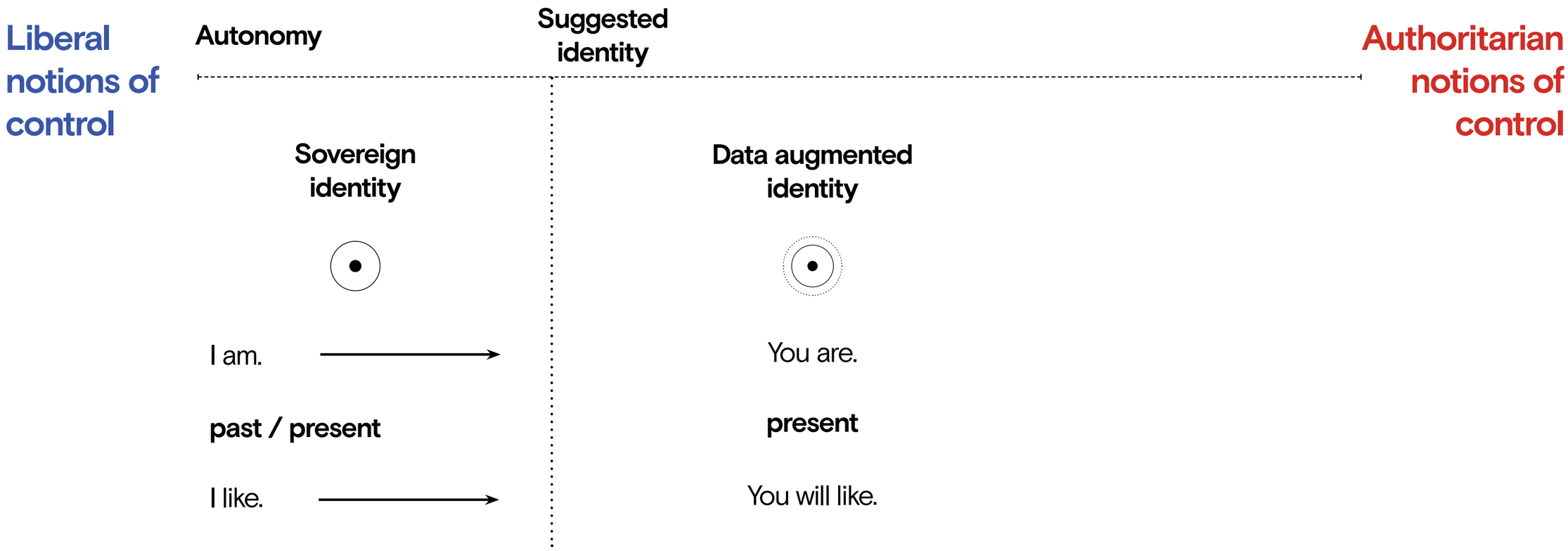
Sovereign identity

I am.

past / present

I like.

identity paradox



identity paradox

Liberal notions of control

Autonomy

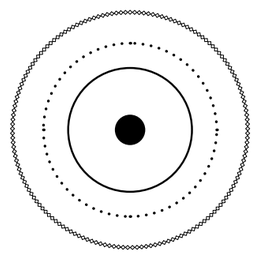
Suggested identity

Imposed identity

Authoritarian notions of control

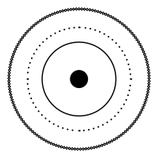
Sovereign identity	Data augmented identity	Restricted networked identity
I am. →	You are. →	You cannot.
past / present	**present**	**emergent future**
I like. →	You will like. →	You will not.

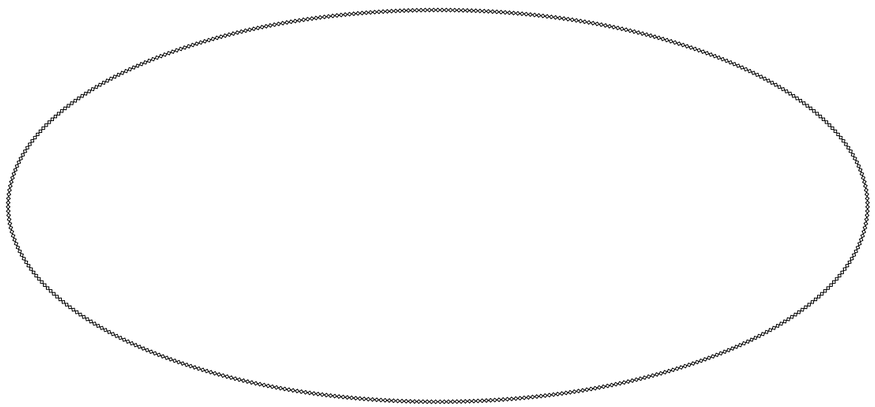
Each line away from the inner black dot represents a decrease in an internal locus of control. Conversely, each line represents one more layer of external control.



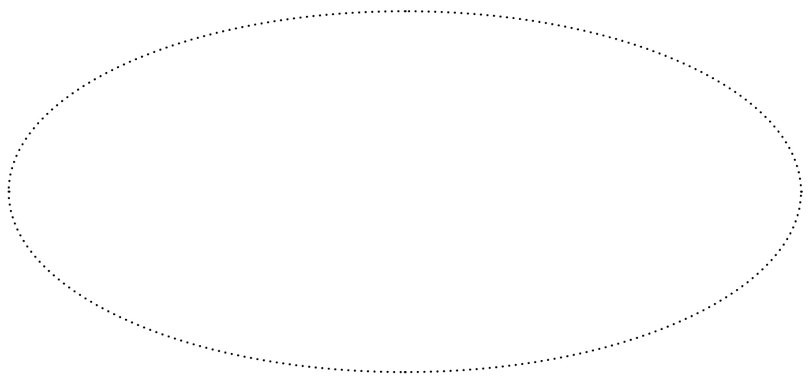
identity paradox

Restricted networked identity

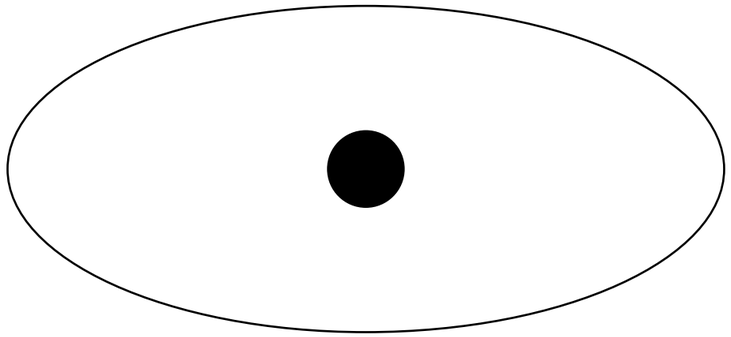




Data augmented identity



Sovereign identity



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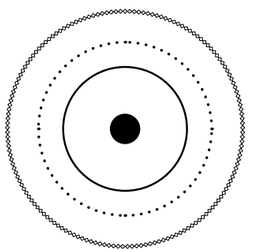
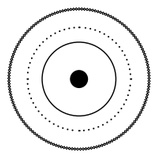


identity paradox

Restricted networked identity



FICO

Government

Data augmented identity

Targeted advertising

Social media behavior

Chinese social credit score

Sovereign identity

Shopping behavior

Political ideas

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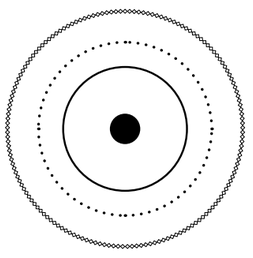

identity paradox

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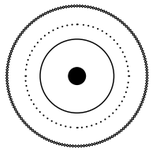
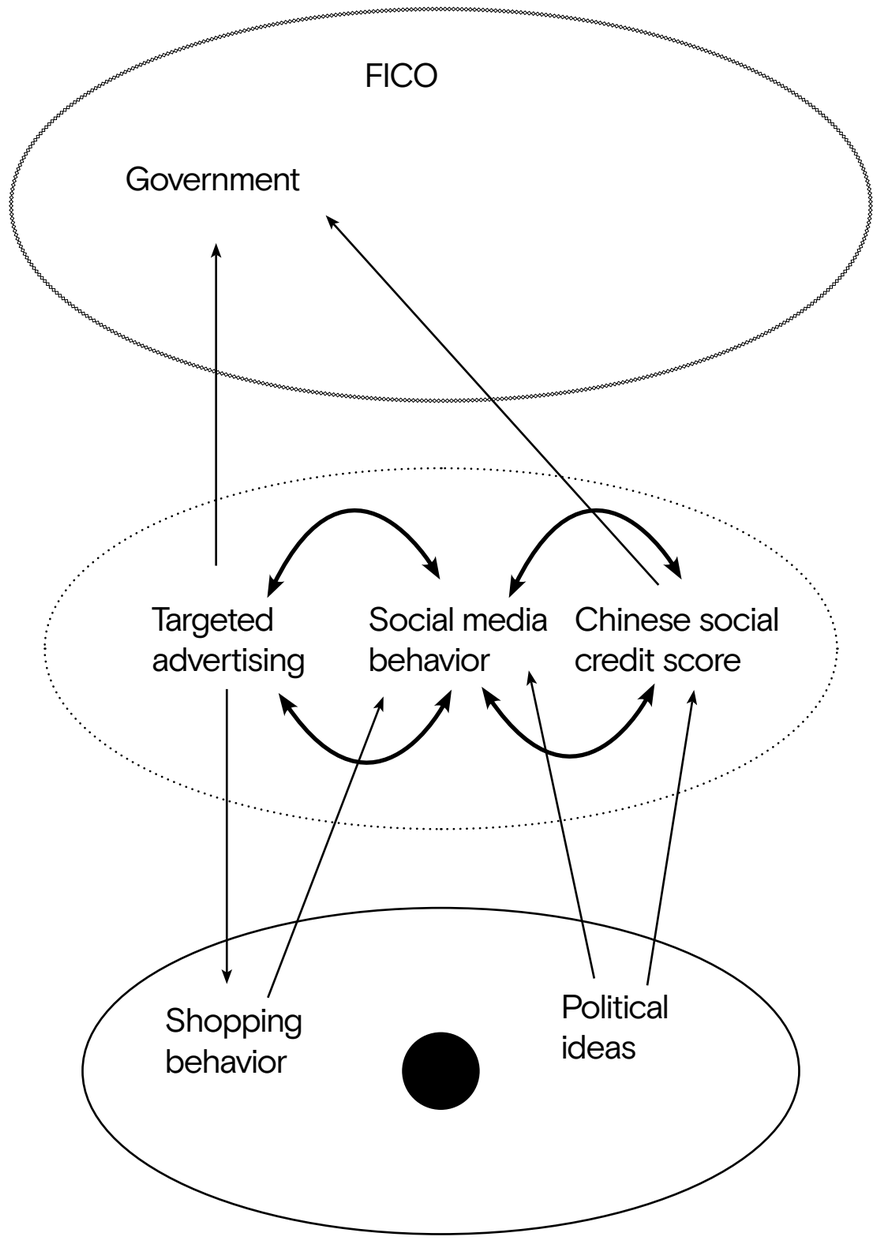


Data augmented identity

Sovereign identity



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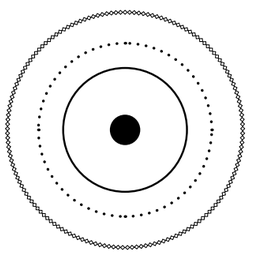


identity paradox

Without developing big data identity protections now, **“you are” and “you will like” risk becoming “you cannot” and “you will not”**.

Thus the **power to use information to nudge, to persuade, to influence, and even to restrict our identities.** [5]

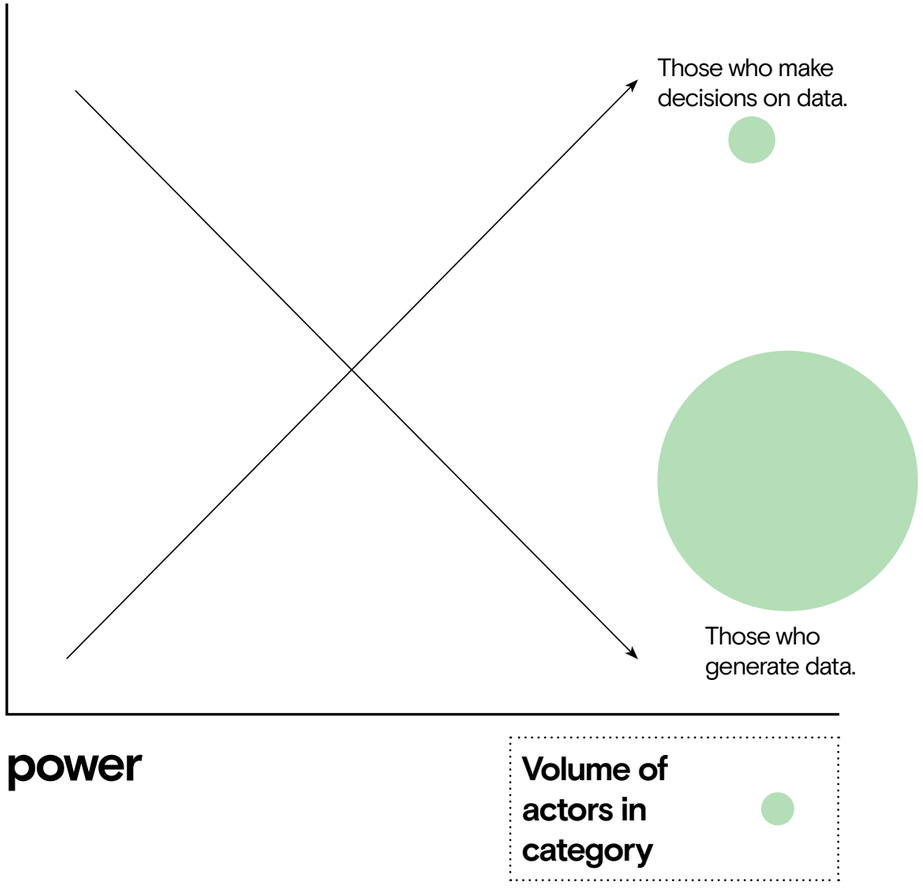
How will our right to identity, our right to say “I am,” fare in the big data era?

With even the most basic access to a combination of big data pools like buying history and social networking posts, “I am” and “I like” risk becoming “you are” and “you will like.” [1]

power paradox

The rhetoric of big data is characterized by its power to transform society, but big data has power effects of its own, which privilege large government and corporate entities at the expense of ordinary individuals. [1]

We need a healthier balance of power between those who generate the data and those who make inferences and decisions based on it, so that one doesn't come to unduly revolt or control the other. [1]



If we do not build privacy, transparency, autonomy, and identity protections into big data from the outset, the Power Paradox will diminish big data's lofty ambitions.

paradigm shift

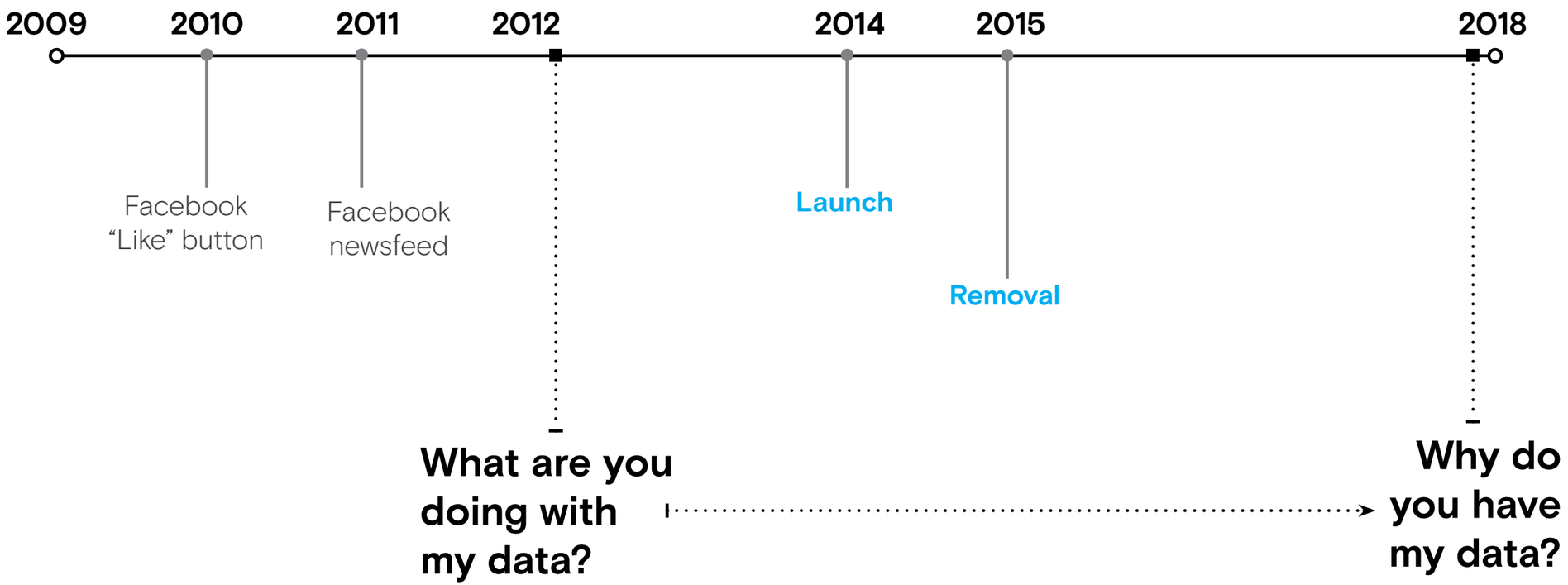
This is Your Digital Life app

That Facebook app, “This Is Your Digital Life,” was a personality quiz created in 2014 by an academic researcher named Aleksander Kogan, who paid about 270,000 people to take it.

The app vacuumed up not just the data of the people who took it, but also — thanks to Facebook’s loose restrictions — data from their friends, too, including details that they hadn’t intended to share publicly.

The data collection was allowed by Facebook at the time. However, Facebook has said that Kogan violated its terms of service by giving the information to Cambridge Analytica. [6]

paradigm shift



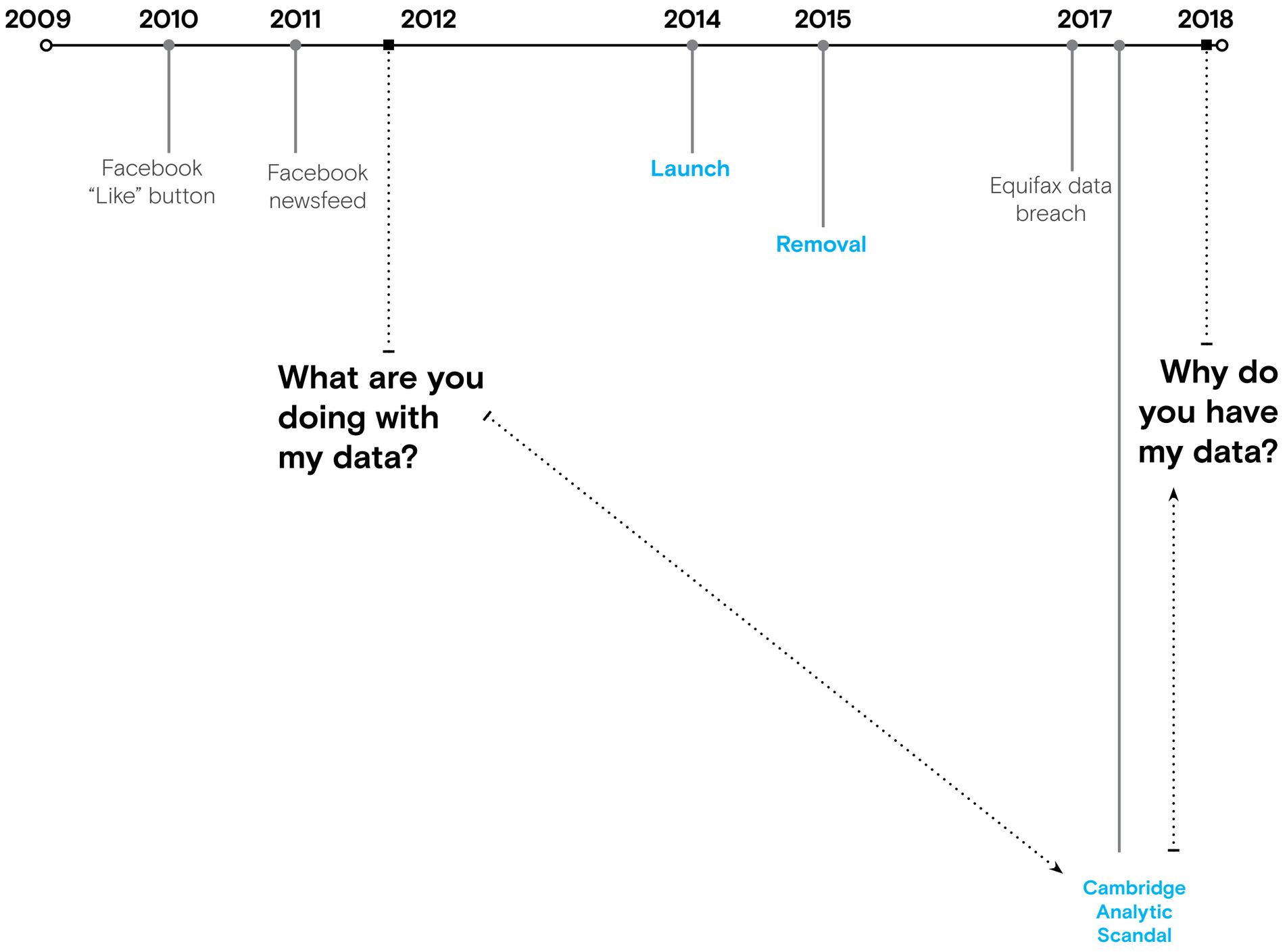
Insights

There has been an escalation of consequences for consumers running parallel to an **increase in ambiguity** of the means to resolve those consequences.

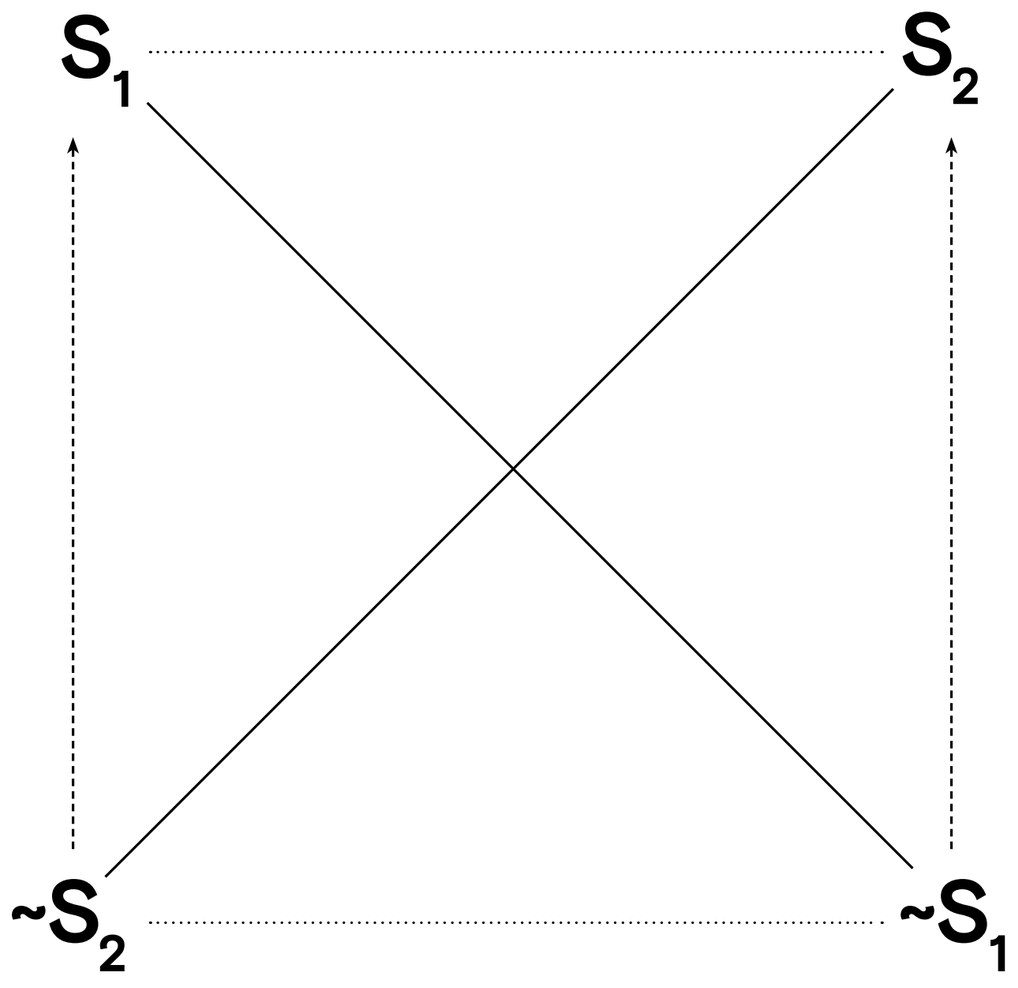
Large scale deception of this kind cause consumers to **lose trust, feel vulnerable and powerless.**

The shift in sentiment described between these two questions has a subtle, but powerful impact on demonstrating **a shift in the publics perception** surrounding these issues.

Our **governments, legislative systems and other regulatory infrastructure are buckling under the immense weight of the complex intellectual property** bolstering these new economies.


2009
2010
2011
2012
2014
2015
2017
2018
Facebook "Like" button
Facebook newsfeed
Launch
Removal
Equifax data breach
What are you doing with my data?
Why do you have my data?
Cambridge Analytic Scandal

semiotic square



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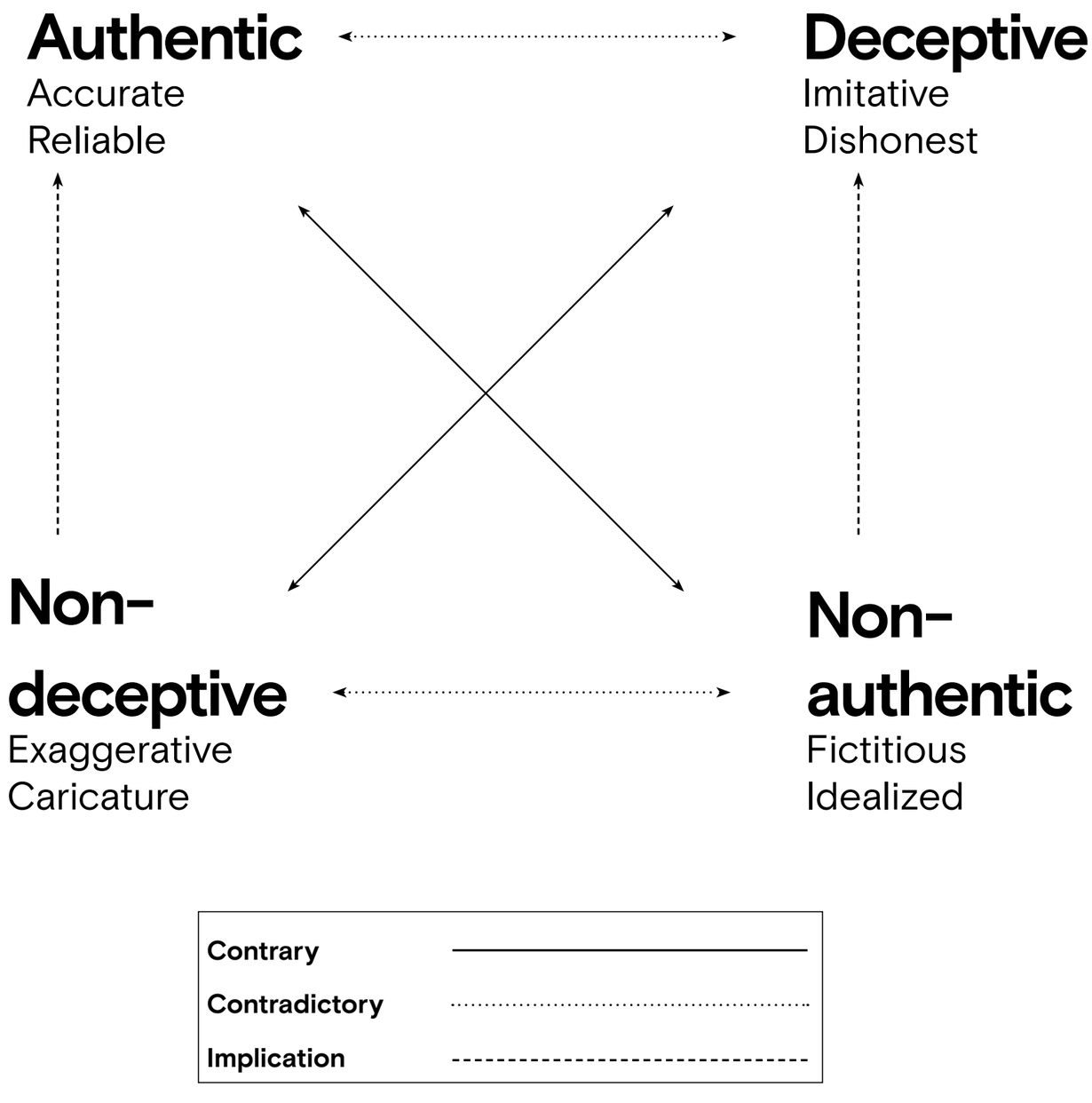

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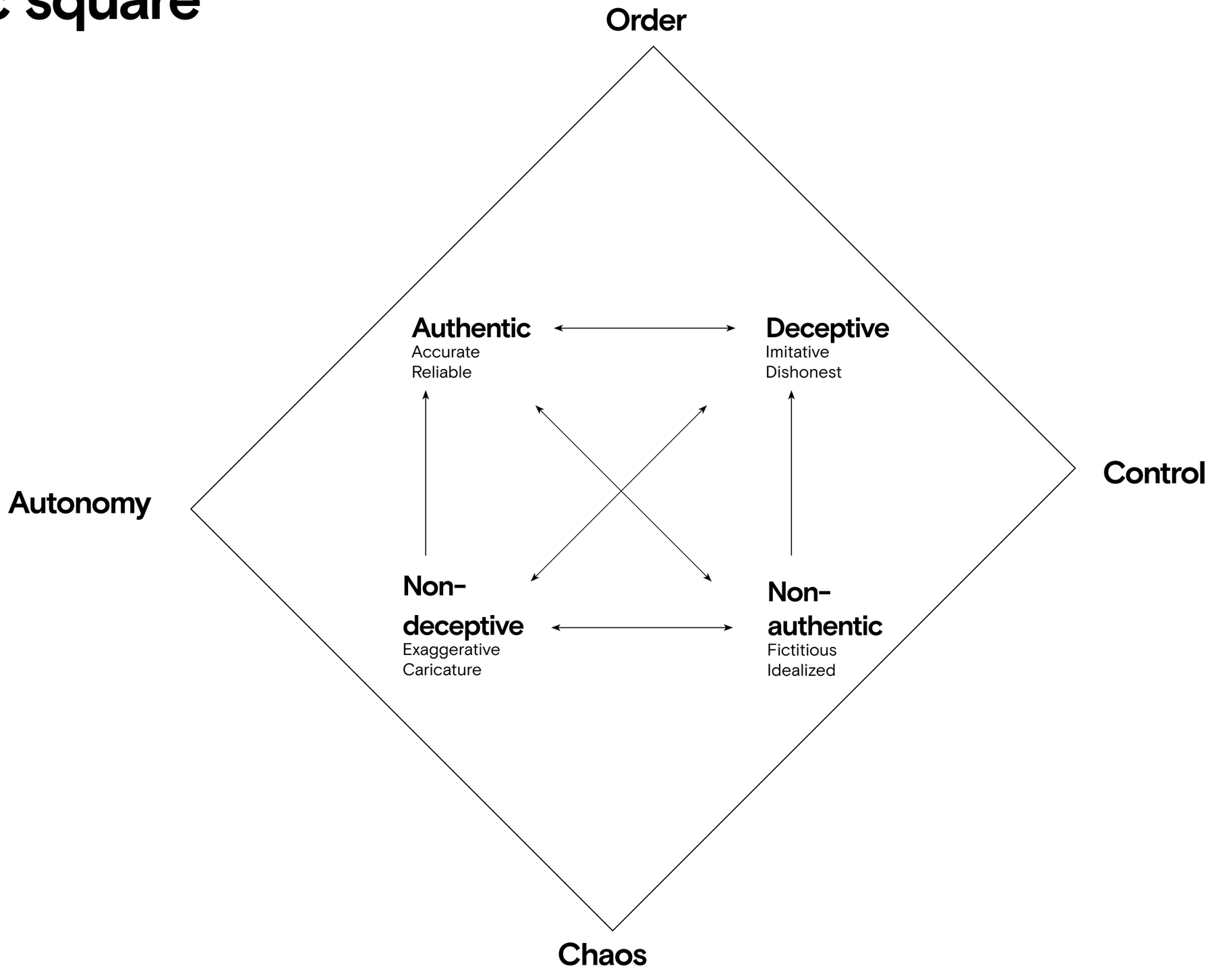

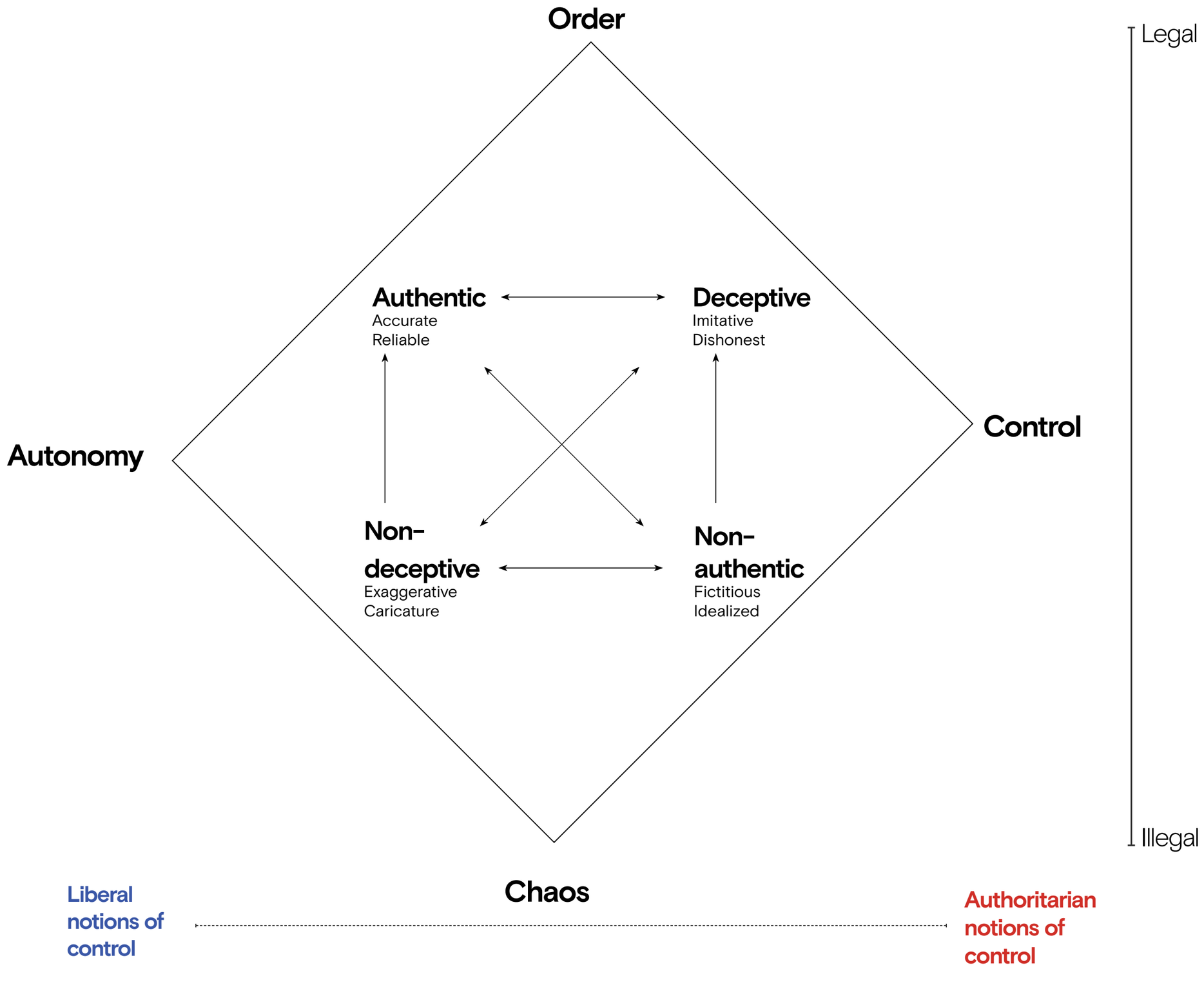
Order
Authentic
Accurate
Reliable
Deceptive
Imitative
Dishonest
Autonomy
Control
Non-
deceptive
Exaggerative
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authentic
Fictitious
Idealized
Chaos
Legal
Illegal
Liberal
notions of
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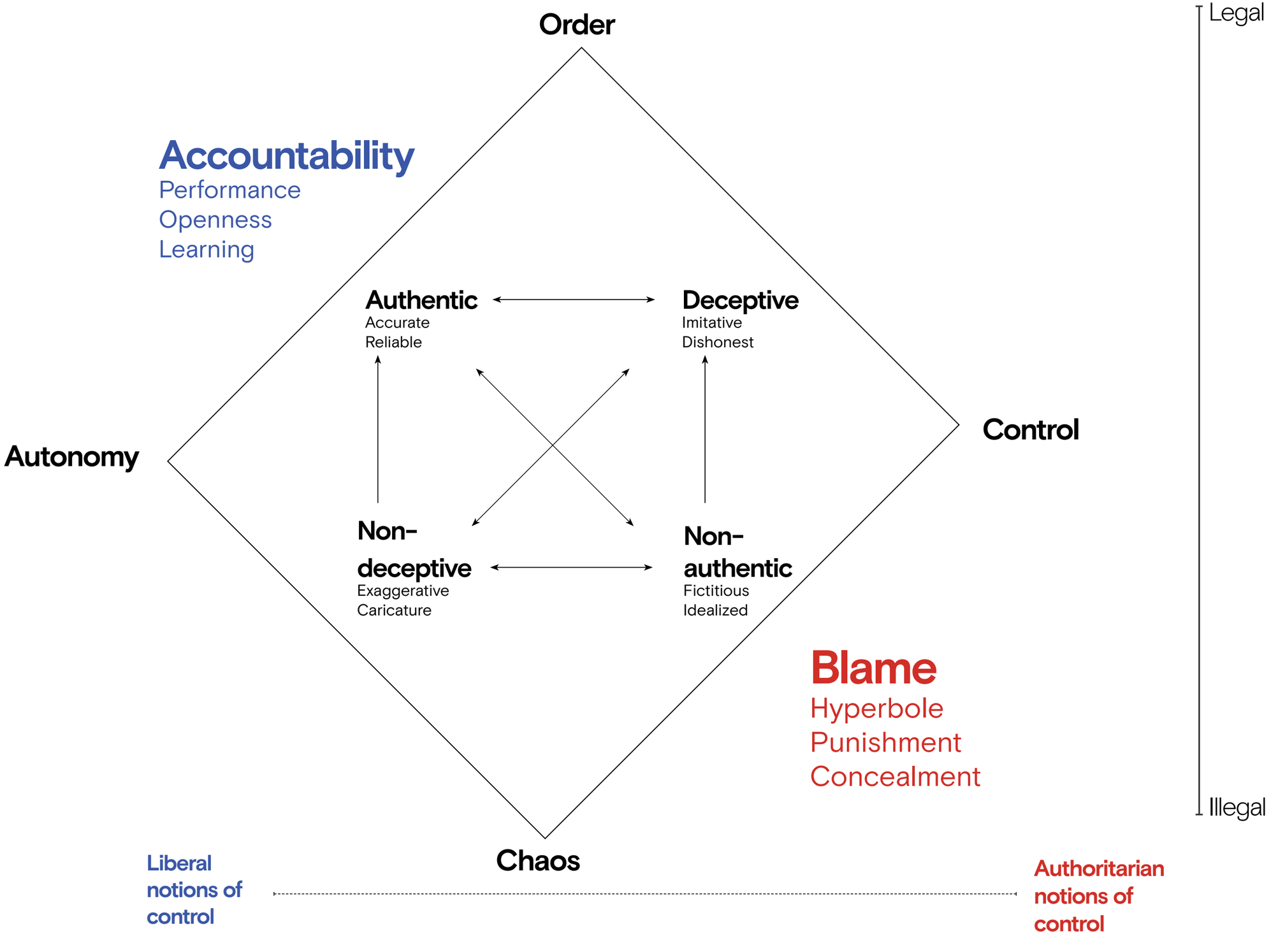
Order
Accountability
Performance
Openness
Learning
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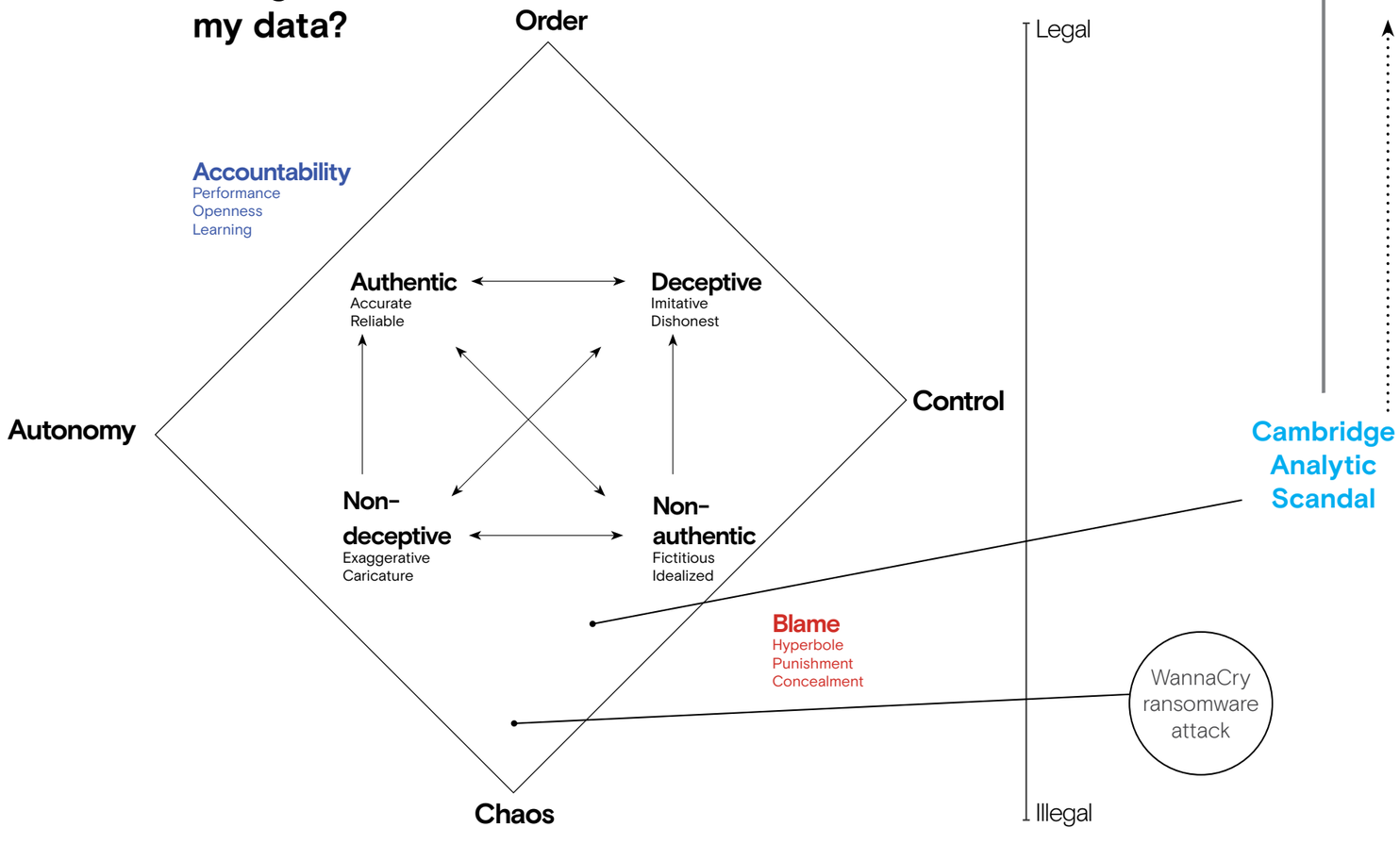

Blame
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Punishment
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WannaCry ransomware attack

Liberal notions of control ⟷ **Authoritarian notions of control**

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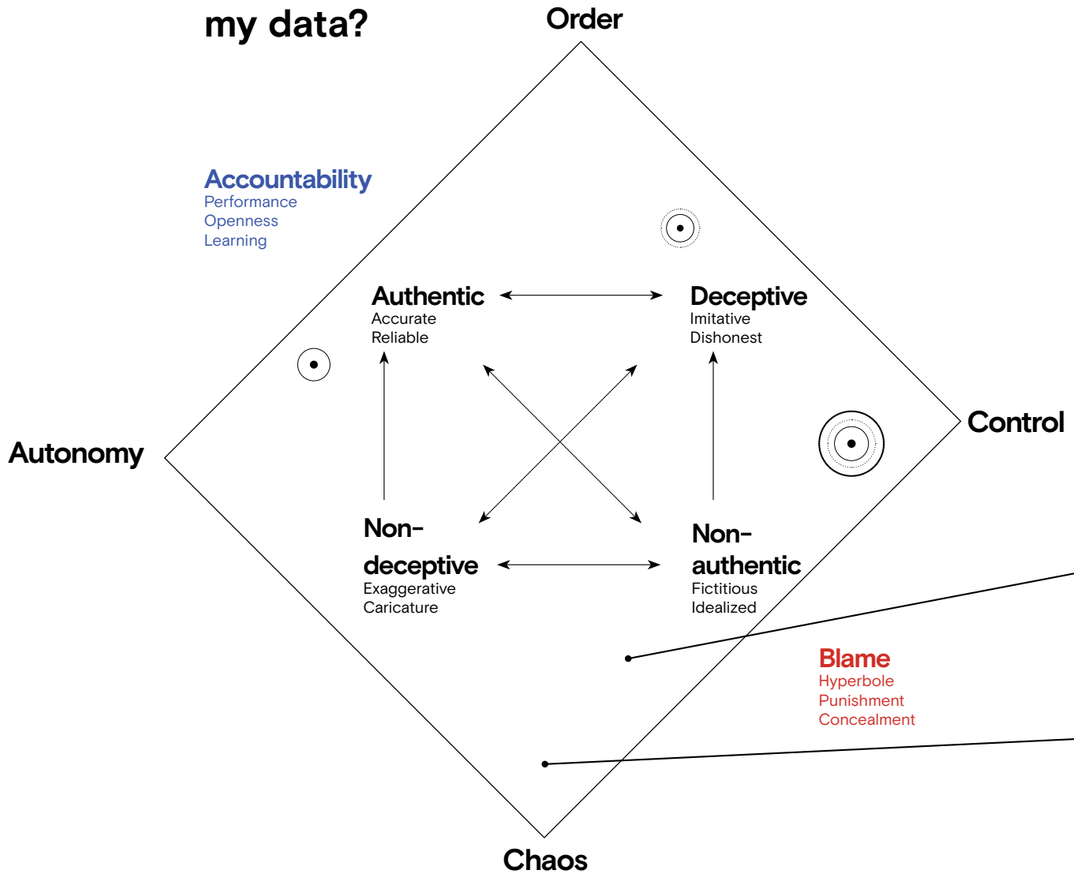

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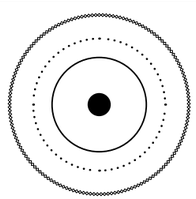

transcending paradox

accountability

Increasing data transparency and analytics will help hold a mirror to our own biases and help us understand, where the dark side of our nature is holding us back.

- Shrupti Shah

literacy

Richard Thaler states that if an organization, a government agency or a business gets data about me, that data belongs to me and therefore I'm just lending it to that organization and the organization, the government agency or the company should be required to provide you that data back in a standardized machine readable format.

- Jim Guszcza

ownership

Jaron Lanier makes the economic case for [ownership], we've got these huge asymmetries in wealth in society, too, whereas really the people that generate the data, [could] be given micropayments every time they like something because they're generating this little valuable data.

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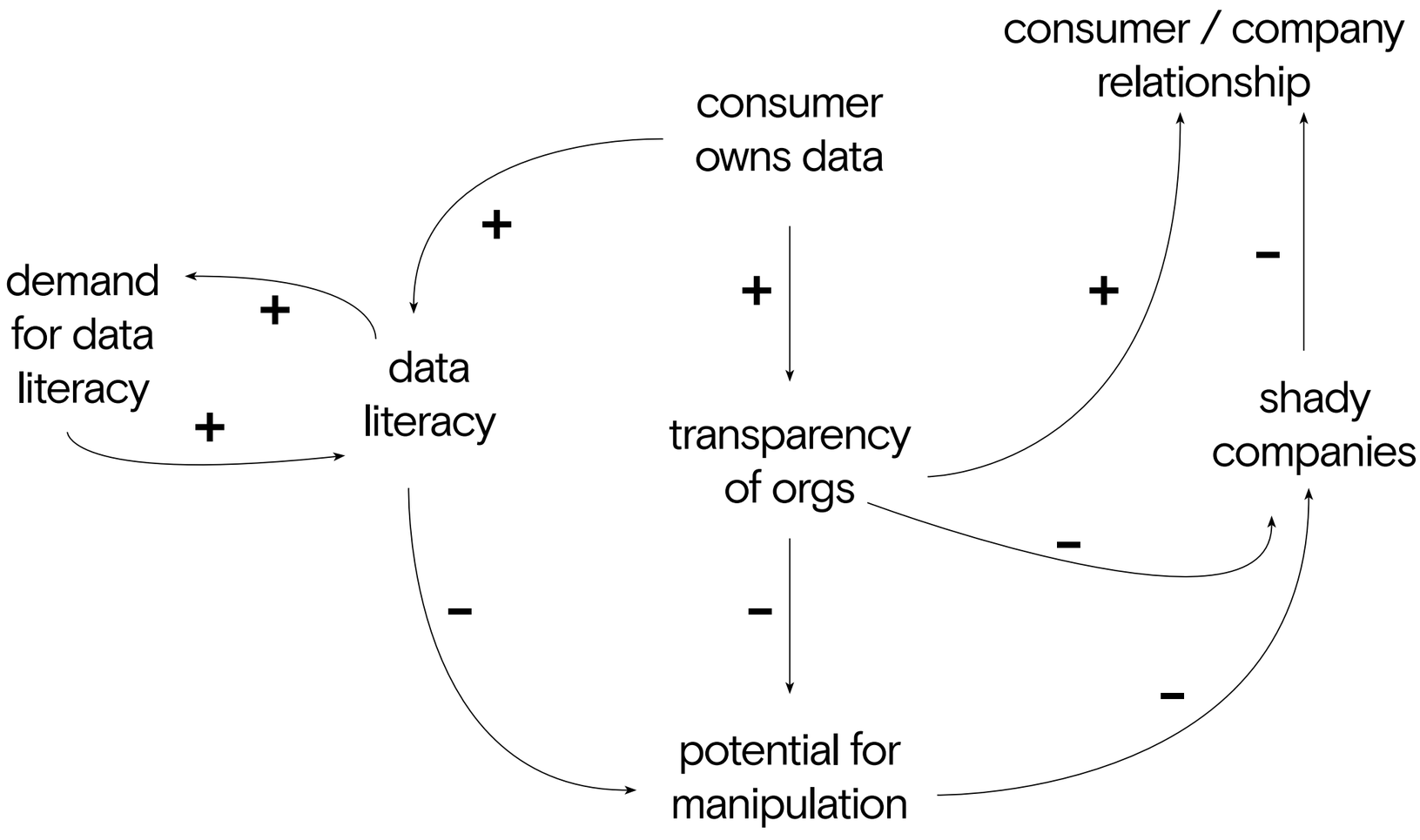
transcending paradox



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