DECEIT

The Pattern Recognition Framework

A Methodology for Identifying and Classifying Manipulation

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the Deceit Pattern Recognition Framework, a methodology for identifying, classifying, and analyzing manipulation patterns across institutional, interpersonal, and machine contexts. The framework consists of a lexicon of 118 named patterns, each with a defined structure including recognition signals, progression paths, and stabilizing moves. We describe the framework's theoretical foundations, its practical application, and its limitations.

1. Introduction

Manipulation is not a single act. It is a pattern of acts. The Deceit Pattern Recognition Framework is built on the premise that manipulation can be named, classified, and recognized in real-time. The framework does not claim to be exhaustive. It claims to be useful.

The framework consists of three components: a lexicon of named patterns, a classification system for those patterns, and a set of stabilizing moves for each pattern. This paper describes each component and the relationships between them.

2. The Lexicon

The lexicon currently contains 118 patterns, organized into three categories:

- **Institutional**: 48 patterns deployed by systems, organizations, and power structures.
- **Interpersonal**: 29 patterns deployed in direct relationships between people.
- **Machine**: 41 patterns deployed by or through artificial intelligence, algorithms, and automated systems.

2.1 Pattern Structure

Each pattern in the lexicon follows a defined structure with up to 20 fields. Rich patterns (those with full field coverage) include:

- **term**: The name of the pattern
- **hook**: A recognition heuristic in literary voice
- **plainEnglish**: A plain-language definition
- **signals**: Observable indicators of the pattern
- **examples**: Concrete instances of the pattern
- **whatItIs**: A formal definition
- **howItStarts**: The onset of the pattern
- **howItProgresses**: The escalation path
- **whatItFeelsLike**: The subjective experience
- **commonSigns**: Observable behaviors
- **whyHardToLeave**: The structural barriers to exit
- **laterRealize**: What becomes visible in retrospect
- **stabilizingMoves**: Countermeasures
- **howMisused**: How the term itself gets misused
- **falsePositive**: What the pattern is NOT
- **relatedTerms**: Connected patterns

2.2 Classification

Each pattern is classified along two axes:

> **Difficulty**
>
> **Beginner**: Common patterns most readers will have encountered. **Intermediate**: Patterns that require more context to identify. **Advanced**: Patterns that are subtle, systemic, or easily mistaken for something else.

> **Truth Adjacency**
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> **Truth-Independent (TI)**: The pattern works regardless of whether the content is true or false.
> **Truth-Adjacent (TA)**: The pattern depends on or exploits the truth value of the content.

3. Theoretical Foundations

The framework draws on several traditions:

- **Propaganda analysis**: The work of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937-1942) and its successors.
- **Cult studies**: The BITE model (Steven Hassan) and coercive control literature.
- **Disinformation research**: The work of RAND, Harvard's Shorenstein Center, and EU East StratCom.
- **Critical algorithm studies**
- **Journalism ethics: The tradition of verification-based journalism (Kovach & Rosenstiel).**

The framework does not claim originality for any individual pattern. It claims originality for the synthesis: a unified vocabulary that spans institutional, interpersonal, and machine contexts, with a consistent structure that enables cross-context recognition.

4. Application

The framework has been applied to 118 editorial pieces on deceit.media. Each piece is tagged with the patterns it illustrates, enabling pattern frequency analysis and cross-cutting investigation.

The framework is also applied in the Pattern Field Guide (a 175-page reference compilation), the Pattern Recognition Flash Cards (a 118-card deck), and three Recovery Packets (safety planning documents for people in crisis).

5. Limitations

The framework has several limitations:

- **Western bias: The patterns are drawn primarily from Western contexts. Patterns specific to other cultural contexts may be missing.**
- **Individual focus: The stabilizing moves are aimed at individuals, not at systemic change. The framework names patterns; it does not propose policy.**
- **Pattern vs. person: The framework names patterns, not people. A person who deploys a pattern is not defined by it. The framework is diagnostic, not accusatory.**
- **Risk of weaponization: The vocabulary can be misused. The `howMisused` field in each entry documents how the term itself gets misused.**

6. Future Work

Future work includes:

- **Expanding the lexicon with patterns from non-Western contexts**
- **Developing a systemic intervention framework (beyond individual stabilizing moves)**
- **Creating training curricula for journalists, advocates, and educators**
- **Building a pattern detection tool for real-time analysis**

7. Conclusion

The Deceit Pattern Recognition Framework is a practical tool for naming and recognizing manipulation. It is not a theory of manipulation. It is a vocabulary for it. The vocabulary is useful because it makes harm visible. Harm that is visible can be addressed. Harm that is invisible cannot.

The framework is open. The lexicon is published. The patterns are named. The work is the using of them.

References

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