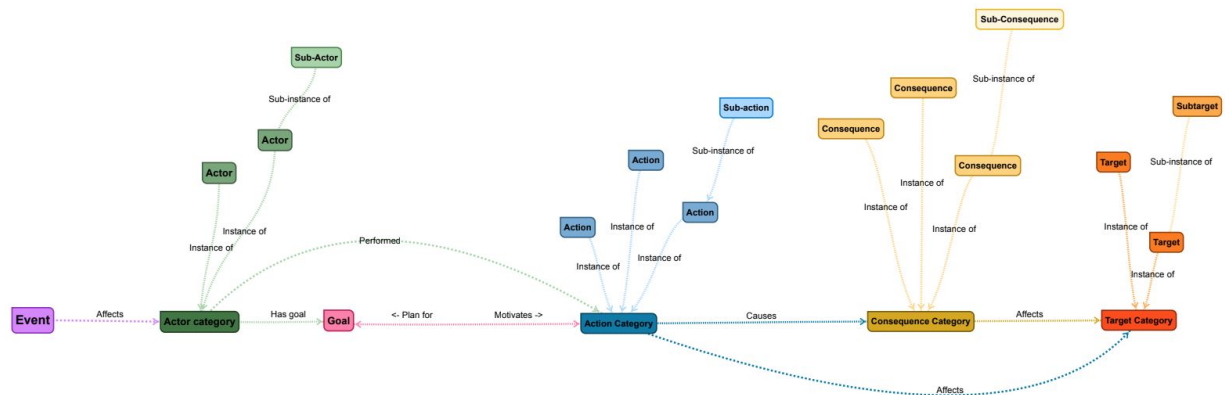


# CODEBOOK



**The Definition:** Conspiracy theory is a narrative explaining an **event or series of events** that involve **deceptive, coordinated actors** working together to achieve **a goal** through **an action or series of actions** that have **consequences** that intentionally disenfranchise or harm an **individual or population**.

**Event:** A time-bounded occurrence, which may or may not be associated with specific time and could be in the past, present or future. It explains, influences or impacts the actors and actions of the conspiracy narrative. Can be implicit or explicitly stated.

**Actor:** Any person or entity (“a conspirator”) explicitly named that could be described as having intentions or an internal state.

- **Intentions** are motivations for actions, whether implicitly or explicitly stated.
- **Internal state** is a collections emotions or feelings

**\*NOTE\*:** Even if there is only one conspirator named, they rarely act alone in their actions, so they would still satisfy the “coordinated actors” category.

**\*NOTE\*:** Explicitly named includes the use of vague pronouns such as but not limited to she/he/they/etc.

**Goal:** the end toward which effort is directed; the reason an action is committed. Can be implicit or explicitly stated.

**Action:** Something done by an actor (a conspirator), the intentionality of which can be implicitly or explicitly stated, which causes consequences.

**Consequences:** A terminal event, act or change in the state of the world *caused* by another event or act. An event/act *causes* a consequence if the consequence would not have otherwise happened.

**Target:** an individual or set of individuals (population) that were harmed and disenfranchised as a consequence of actions.

**Disenfranchisement:** a reduction in autonomy of a person or collection of people. Not necessarily the same as harm, but could be the outcome of a conspirator's actions.

**Deceit:** Keeping the truth hidden, especially to get a direct or indirect advantage or benefit. Any provision of information or lack thereof which leads an individual to act on the knowledge that is incorrect or incomplete. Conspirator knows but does not tell or deliberately misleads to cause harm or cause a victim to complete an action.

**\*NOTE\*:** White lies and the withholding of information still count as deceit.

## CODING DIRECTIONS:

**CONSPIRACY THEORY:** Four of the six categories - coordinated actors, actions or series of actions, consequences that disenfranchise or harm, and target (individual or population) - **are requirements** for a story to be a conspiracy theory. Goals and Events are **OPTIONAL**. Mark if they are present, but their absence or presence does not affect whether something is a conspiracy theory or not.

**CONSPIRATORIAL THINKING:** Message contains **one or more** of the six categories, but not all four required categories. Message should imply support for a conspiracy theory.

**\*NOTE on MULTIPLE INSTANCES\*:** If there are multiple instances of conspiracy theories or conspiratorial thinking in a single post, code the BEST, most COMPLETE instance and mark the box named "multiple".

**\*NOTE on QUOTES\*:** If the post contains a quote with a conspiracy theory, but the poster responding is arguing with the CT, the post should still be coded as containing a CT.

**\*NOTE on "this CAUSES this"\*:** type of messages -> these are NOT enough to be considered conspiratorial thinking

Examples

- MMR causes autism

- Flu vaccine causes the flu
- Flu vaccine causes

**\*NOTE on ONLY SAYING CONSPIRACY:** If someone just says there is a conspiracy, without saying what it is, it should be an exception and we should say that the post is evidence of conspiratorial thinking.