Pew poll: 1-in-4 Americans believe 'powerful people planted COVID-19'

[A] conspiracy theory circulating widely online… alleges that powerful people intentionally planned the coronavirus outbreak. And a quarter of U.S. adults see at least some truth in it – including 5% who say it is definitely true and 20% who say it is probably true, according to a June Pew Research Center survey. The share of Americans who see at least some truth to the theory differs by demographics and partisanship.

Educational attainment is an especially important factor when it comes to perceptions of the conspiracy theory. Around half of Americans with a high school diploma or less education (48%) say the theory is probably or definitely true, according to the survey, which was conducted as part of the Center's American News Pathways project. That compares with 38% of those who have completed some college but have no degree, 24% of those with a bachelor's degree and 15% of those with a postgraduate degree.

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Conservative Republicans are especially likely to see at least some truth in the theory: Roughly four-in-ten (37%) say it is probably or definitely true. This contrasts with 29% of moderate and liberal Republicans, 24% of moderate and conservative Democrats and 10% of liberal Democrats.

Roughly a third of Black (33%) and Hispanic adults (34%) say the theory is probably or definitely true, compared with about two-in-ten white adults (22%) and Asian Americans (19%).

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