Can intelligence explain the overrepresentation of liberals and leftists in American academia?

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A B S T R A C T

It is well known that individuals with so-called liberal or leftist views are overrepresented in American academia. By bringing together data on American academics, the general population and a high-IQ population, the present study investigates how much of this overrepresentation can be explained by intelligence. It finds that intelligence can account for most of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issues of abortion, homosexuality and traditional gender roles. By contrast, it finds that intelligence cannot account for any of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issue of income inequality. But for methodological reasons, this finding is tentative. Furthermore, the paper finds that intelligence may account for less than half of the disparity on liberal versus conservative ideology, and much less than half the disparity on Democrat versus Republican identity. Following the analysis, eight alternative explanations for liberal and leftist overrepresentation are reviewed.

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Between economics and political science, sociology is not social science. It is rather scientific socialism... Our role as sociologists is to watch, engage and challenge an unequal world... So sociologists of the world, unite!

—Michael Burawoy's presidential address at the 2014 International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology

1. Introduction

1.1. The extent of liberal and leftist overrepresentation

In contemporary American politics, a distinction is commonly made between liberals,1 who tend to favour more socially liberal and economically leftist policies, and conservatives, who tend to favour more socially conservative and economically rightist policies. Liberals typically support the Democratic Party at elections, while conservatives typically support the Republican Party. Numerous studies have documented that individuals identifying as liberal or as Democrat are overrepresented in American academia2 (Buckley Jr., 1951; Lazarsfeld & Thielens, 1958; Ladd & Lipset, 1976; Lipset, 1982; Brookings Institution, 2001; Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Klein, Stern & Western, 2005; Tobin & Weinberg, 2006; Zipp & Fenwick, 2006; Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman & Lichter, 2009; Yancey, 2011; Gross & Fosse, 2012; Darcy, 2012; Gross, 2013; Solon, 2014; Duarte et al., 2014; Lindgren, 2015; Coyle, 2015; Aspelund et al., 2015). Moreover, academics' views on specific issues such as gay marriage and income inequality are much more socially liberal and economically leftist than those of the general population (Gross & Simmons, 2007).

Overrepresentation of liberals and Democrats appears to be largest in the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts (particularly sociology, anthropology and the performing arts), and appears to be smallest in economics, business, computer science, engineering and military science (Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Klein, Stern & Western, 2005; Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman & Lichter, 2009). For example, the ratio of liberal to conservative English literature professors may be as high as 28:1 (Rothman & Lichter, 2009), while the ratio of Democrat to Republican sociology professors may be as high as 44:1 (Cardiff & Klein, 2005). Overrepresentation in the physical sciences, the biological sciences and mathematics appears to be intermediate, though still considerable (Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Klein, Stern & Western, 2005; Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman & Lichter, 2009).

After reviewing the political affiliations of American law professors, Lindgren (2015) concluded that, “By some measures, in 1997 the most underrepresented racially defined groups were Non-Hispanic white Republicans and non-Hispanic white Protestants”. He also noted that, “though women were strongly underrepresented compared to the full-time working population, all of that underrepresentation was among Republican women, who were—and are—almost missing from
law teaching.” Similarly, when the psychologist Jonathan Haidt asked attendees at the 2011 meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology to indicate their political affiliations via a show of hands, he counted only 3 conservatives and only 12 libertarians, but approximately 800 liberals (Duarte et al., 2014).3

Overrepresentation of liberals and Democrats is evident not just in surveys of political views and voting behaviour, but also in databases of campaign contributions and commencement speaker invitations. In the 2012 election cycle, around 85% of campaign contributions from faculty and staff at Ivy League colleges reportedly went to President Barack Obama’s election campaign (Darcy, 2012). And a disparity of almost identical magnitude was observed in a 2015 analysis of political donations by the faculty of Harvard University (Aspelund et al., 2015). The 23rd annual Commencement Speakers Survey carried out by Young America’s Foundation documented a ratio of six liberal speakers for every one conservative speaker among the top 100 universities (Coyle, 2015). And notably in 2014, invitations to at least six prominent commencement speakers’ were met with protests on campus from liberal or leftist student groups, leading to the cancellation of four4 (Strauss, 2014; Chotiner, 2014).

It is important to keep in mind that American academia has probably not always been so skewed toward liberalism and leftist (see Sailer, 2015). Duarte et al., (2014) compiled historical figures on academic psychologists’ partisan affiliations, which indicate that the ratio of Democrats to Republicans may have been as low as 2:1 or even parity in the 1920s. Moreover, a historical analysis of straw polls carried out by The Harvard Crimson revealed that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Republican presidential candidates regularly won a majority of support from the student body (Iacopetti, 2015). As Das (2012) writes, “Even the Harvard pedigree of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Class of 1904 and a president of The Harvard Crimson, was insufficient to take the top of The Crimson’s poll. As the rest of the country voted overwhelmingly for Roosevelt, the student body picked Herbert Hoover—the man hated nationwide for supposedly bringing on the scourge of the Great Depression”.

1.2. Intelligence as an explanation for liberal and leftist overrepresentation

One hypothesis that has been put forward to explain the overrepresentation of liberals and leftists in American academia is that they tend to have higher intelligence than conservatives and rightists (Solon, 2014; Solon, 2015; see also Charlton, 2009; Gross & Fosse, 2012; Gross, 2013; Fosse, Freese & Gross, 2014). Academic advancement requires very high intelligence, and since few individuals with conservative or rightist views possess very high intelligence, such individuals are comparatively scarce within the academy. At present, there is a certain amount of circumstantial evidence for this hypothesis. Numerous studies have found that individuals with higher intelligence to be more socially liberal on issues such as gay marriage, abortion, working women, free speech and marijuana legalisation (Miles et al., 2000; Deary, Batty & Gale, 2008a; Deary, Batty & Gale, 2008b; Kemmelmeier, 2008; Stankov, 2009; Schoon, Cheng, Gale, Batty & Deary, 2010; Kanazawa, 2010; Heaven, Ciarrochi & Leeson, 2011; Hodson & Bussiere, 2012; Carl, 2014a; Carl, 2015a,b; Onraet et al., 2015). Americans with higher intelligence are apparently more likely to identify as liberal on a liberal/conservatism scale (Kanazawa, 2010; Carl, 2015a; Woodley of Menie & Dunkel, 2015; Meisenberg, 2015). And compared to Americans with only high intelligence, those with the highest intelligence are more likely to identify as Democrat, more likely to support welfare for the poor, and more likely to favour affirmative action for minorities (Carl, 2015a,b; see also Caplan, 2001; Gerber et al., 2010). In addition, scholarly elites such as Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners and Putnam fellows have donated to the Democratic Party far more often than they have donated to the Republican Party (Solon, 2014; Solon, 2015).

However, there is also some circumstantial evidence against the hypothesis. In particular, several studies have found that individuals with higher intelligence tend to be more economically rightist in areas such as redistribution of income and government control of the economy (Miles et al., 2000; Caplan & Miller, 2010; Iyer et al., 2012; Carl, 2014a,b; Schweizer, 2008; Mollerstrom & Seim, 2014; Oskarsson et al., 2014; Rindermann et al., 2012; Carl, 2015a,b; Karadja et al., 2014; Morton et al., 2011; see also Weakliem, 2002; Alesina & Giuliano, 2011; Malka et al., 2014; and see Rindermann & Thompson, 2011). Furthermore, it has been argued that a single ideological axis running from liberal to conservative is insufficient to characterise the distribution of political beliefs in countries such as the United States5 (Feldman & Johnston, 2014; Carl, 2015a,b; see also De Regt, Mortelmanns and Smits, 2011; Malka et al., 2014). Indeed in the US, intelligence appears to have a monotonically positive relationship with both socially liberal beliefs and at least some measures of economically rightist beliefs (Carl, 2015a,b). As mentioned above, other measures of economic rightist beliefs, especially those pertaining to welfare and affirmative action, appear to have non-monotonic relation to intelligence such that Americans of high intelligence lean further right than those of highest intelligence (Solon, 2014; Solon, 2015; Carl, 2015a,b).

In fact, there is not only circumstantial evidence against the hypothesis, but at least three partial disconfirmations. Gross and Fosse (2012) identified professors in the US General Social Survey data, and attempted to gauge how much of the difference in liberalism between them and the general population could be explained by each of several characteristics, one of which was intelligence (measured by a 10-word vocabulary test). They found that “the greater average verbal ability of professors does nothing to account for the political gap between professors and other Americans”. Similarly, Gross (2013, p. 99, Table S-2.81) analyzed data on students’ career aspirations from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) College Senior Survey, and found that “in a statistical model predicting the likelihood of aspiring to be a professor, the effect of political liberalism was little changed when students’ SAT scores were factored in”. Finally, Fosse, Freese and Gross (2014) examined which of several characteristics might explain the association between liberal self-identification and graduate school attendance, using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. They found that adjusting for both high school GPA and intelligence (measured by an 87-item picture vocabulary test) only modestly attenuated the effect of liberal self-identification on graduate school attendance; indeed, the former remained a significant predictor of the latter after adjustment (and see Gross, 2013, p. 99, p. 342).

However, there are arguably methodological limitations to each of these studies. First, all three operationalized political ideology as a single dimension running from very liberal to very conservative. As noted, this may be problematic, given that intelligence appears to be positively associated with both socially liberal beliefs and at least some measures of economically rightist beliefs (Carl, 2015a,b; see also Miles et al., 2000; 6

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3 The authors do, however, state that “in this non-anonymous survey, many conservatives may have been reluctant to raise their hands” (Duarte et al., 2014).

4 The six speakers were: Colorado state Senator, Michael Johnston; television host, Bill Maher; newspaper columnist, George Will; former secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice; head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde; and former chancellor of UC Berkeley, Robert J. Birgeneau. Rice, Lagarde and Birgeneau reportedly rescinded their invitations; Will was uninvited (Strauss, 2014; Chotiner, 2014). In fact, numerous scholars have traced the emergence of a marked opposition towards free speech among certain sections of the left (Bawer, 2012; Browne, 2006; Bruce, 2003; Charlton, 2011; Fearman, 2012; Goldberg, 2009; Kors & Silverglade, 1999; Lukianoff, 2014a, 2014b; Payne, 2012; Rauch, 1995; Sacks & Thiel, 1999; Powers, 2015; Gottfredson, 2010).

5 In a fascinating recent study of political beliefs in China, Pan & Xu (2015) document a single ideological dimension running from nationalistic, socially conservative and pro-communist at one end, to globalist, socially liberal and pro-capitalist at the other. This is in contrast to the United States and other Western countries, where individuals with socially liberal beliefs tend to be less rather than more pro-capitalist.
Weakliem, 2002; Oskarsson et al., 2014; Feldman & Johnston, 2014; Malka et al., 2014). Second, all three estimated multivariate models that included many covariates. While multivariate estimation is of course perfectly defensible, some of the covariates included (such as race and family background\textsuperscript{6}) are causally prior to intelligence, so their inclusion may have reduced the extent to which adjusting for intelligence attenuated the effect of political beliefs. Third, both Gross (2013) and Fosse, Gross and Ma (2014) studied graduate school attendance rather than employment within the academy per se. While these two outcomes are closely related, they are obviously not one and the same. Fourth, Gross and Fosse (2012) obtained a surprisingly low average score on the vocabulary test among the professors in their sample, namely 8.04 out of 10. This corresponds to a mean IQ of only = -115, which is substantially lower than previous IQ estimates for academics that have been reported in the literature (see Dutton & Lynn, 2014).

The present study investigates how much of the overrepresentation of liberals and leftists in American academia can be explained by intelligence. Section 2 describes the data and statistical methodology. Section 3 presents the main results, along with a few sensitivity checks. And Section 4 provides a general discussion. This final section summarises the results of the analysis, details the study's methodological limitations, and reviews eight alternative explanations for the overrepresentation of liberals and leftists in American academia.

2. Method

2.1. Method for testing whether intelligence can explain liberal and leftist overrepresentation

Fig. 1 illustrates the method used for assessing how much of the overrepresentation of liberals and leftists in American academia can be explained by intelligence. I first bring together data on the political beliefs of three separate populations: academics, the general population, and a high-IQ population. I then calculate the proportion of each population that identifies with various political positions (e.g., thinking of oneself as a liberal, supporting the Democratic Party). The extent of overrepresentation for any particular position is simply the percentage-point difference between academics and the general population (i.e., the total length of the right-hand bar in Fig. 1). And the fraction of this overrepresentation that can be explained by intelligence is simply the percentage-point difference between the high-IQ population and the general population divided by the percentage-point difference between academics and the general population (i.e., the grey portion of the right-hand bar divided by the total length of the bar). In the hypothetical case of Fig. 1, there is a 10 percentage-point gap between academics and the general population of which 50% (i.e., 5 percentage points) can be explained by intelligence.

2.2. Data on the political beliefs of academics

Data on the political beliefs of academics were taken from Gross and Simmons (2007), who in the mid 2000s conducted a survey (Politics of the American Professoriate) into the political beliefs of American college professors. These authors obtained their sample by: stratifying degree-awarding schools into four categories (community colleges, four-year colleges, non-elite research universities, elite research universities); randomly selecting schools from each of these four categories using data from the National Centre for Education Statistics; identifying the department or program within the selected school that most closely matched each one of a large number of disciplines; and randomly selecting a faculty member from within the selected department or program to be included in the study. Invitation letters were then sent to 2,958 academics, along with the chance to win a $100 gift certificate as an incentive. Participants took part in the survey by filling out a questionnaire online. A final response rate of 51% was attained. After eliminating 54 academics with part-time appointments, they were left with 1,417 valid cases (for additional details, see Gross & Simmons, 2007).

There are several key advantages to using Gross and Simmons' (2007) data, as opposed to the data collected by any of the other studies on the political beliefs of American academics (e.g., Lazersfeld & Thielens, 1958; Ladd & Lipset, 1976; Lipset, 1982; Brookings Institution, 2001; Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Klein, Stern & Western, 2005; Tobin & Weinberg, 2006; Zipp & Fenwick, 2006; Rothman & Lichter, 2009). First, it is one of the most recent studies in the relevant area, which permits inferences to be drawn about the current state of affairs. Second, it is arguably the most rigorously collected and representative survey to date. For example, weights were applied in order to improve representativeness. And as Gross and Simmons (2007) point out, several previous studies (namely Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Tobin & Weinberg, 2006) may have been afflicted by sampling and non-response biases. Third, and most importantly, it included questions from the US General Social Survey (GSS), the source from where data on the political beliefs of the general population and a high-IQ population were taken. Fig. 2, which displays the proportion of academics identifying as Republican and Democrat in six recent studies, indicates that Gross and Simmons' (2007) figures are broadly consistent with those reported by other authors.

2.3. Data on the political beliefs of the general population and a high-IQ population

The GSS is a public opinion survey that has been administered to a nationally representative sample of American adults every 1–2 years since 1972 (see Smith et al., 2014). It contains questions on respondents’ socio-economic characteristics, behaviours, and social attitudes. Many waves also include a 10-word vocabulary test where the respondent is asked to identify which of five phrases supplies the correct definition of a given word. Despite its crudeness, the test reportedly has a strong correlation with general intelligence (Wolfe, 1980; and see Caplan & Miller, 2010). In general, vocabulary tests load more strongly onto the crystallised factor of general intelligence than onto the fluid factor (Cattell, 1963; Horn & Cattell, 1966). But they tend to have high heritabilities and high g-loadings, relative to other subtests (Jensen, 2001). After correction for reliability and validity, Woodley of Menie, Fernandes, Figueredo and Meisenberg (2015) estimated the g-loading of the GSS vocabulary test at $r = .93$. In addition, the GSS vocabulary test is correlated with the other measures of cognitive ability that have been featured in various waves of the survey (Carl, 2014b).

Accordingly, I define the high-IQ population as the roughly 4% of GSS respondents who scored 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. Note that a score of 10 equates to a mean IQ of ~128, which is just under two standard deviations above the population mean. This is in line with estimates for the average IQ of academics that have been reported in the literature, though it may understate the intelligence of academics in the physical sciences, whilst possibly overstating the intelligence of academics in the social sciences and humanities (see Dutton & Lynn, 2014). Gibson and Light (1967) tested 148 male academics at Cambridge University, and reported a mean IQ of ~128 among physicists, and of ~122 among social science PhDs. Of course, since these figures correspond to all PhDs, they are likely

\textsuperscript{6} Indicators of family background (such as father’s occupation) are causally prior to intelligence in two senses (see Jensen, 1973; Harris, 1998; Pinker, 2002; Trzaskowski et al., 2014). First, family background may have a direct effect on intelligence via socialization. Second, family background may serve as a proxy for inherited genetic factors that influence the intelligence of both parents and children.
to underestimate the intelligence of those PhDs who went on to become academics. Several bloggers have reported mean IQs for different subjects derived from scores on the Graduate Record Examination, a standardised test taken by those applying to American graduate schools (Hsu, 2005; Sailer, 2007; Olson, 2014; and see Khan, 2012). The typical finding is a mean IQ of ~130 among physicists, and of ~115 among social scientists. While these figures again correspond to all applicants, rather than just those who went to become academics, they likely overstate the intelligence of individuals in more quantitative fields (see Sailer, 2007). Lastly, there is some evidence that more eminent scholars, who presumably have higher intelligence, tend to be more liberal than their less eminent colleagues (see Rothman, Kelly-Woessner & Woessner, 2011, pp. 63–156; Solon, 2014; Solon, 2015).

2.4. Calculation of proportions for each population

Seven GSS questions that were included in Gross and Simmons’ (2007) survey were available in the GSS for a relatively large number of respondents over the time period 2000–2014. First, “I’m going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?” Second, “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?” Third, “Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor. Here is a card with a scale from 1 to 7. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and poor, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences. What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel?” Fourth, “What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?” Fifth, the respondent is asked to say whether he or she “strongly agrees”, “agrees”, “disagrees” or “strongly disagrees” with the statement, “It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.” Sixth, the respondent is asked say whether he or she “strongly agrees”, “agrees”, “disagrees” or “strongly disagrees” with the statement, “A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.” Seventh, “Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if she wants it for any reason.”

Answers to the first, second and third questions were divided into those corresponding to one or other of two alternative political positions. For the first question, liberals were defined as those answering “extremely liberal”, “liberal” or “slightly liberal”, while conservatives were defined as those answering “slightly conservative”, “conservative” or “extremely conservative”. For the second question, Democrats were defined as those answering “strong Democrat” or “weak Democrat”, while Republicans were defined as those answering “weak Republican” or “strong Republican”. For the third question, a problem was encountered in that Gross and Simmons (2007) do not report percentages separately for each of the seven response categories, but rather for three aggregated categories: “reduce inequality”, “neither” and “don’t reduce inequality”. And they do not explain how they recoded the original seven-point scale into their three-category schema. For reasons I explain later, I defined individuals in favour of reducing inequality as those answering “1” or “2” on the seven-point scale, and individuals opposed to reducing inequality as those answering “6” or “7”. However, I also report results where individuals in favour of reducing inequality are defined as those answering “1”, “2” or “3” on the seven-point scale, and individuals opposed to reducing inequality as those answering “5”, “6” or “7”.

Answers to the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh questions were reclassified in such a way as to identify as single political position. For the fourth question, individuals who believe that homosexuality is not wrong at all were defined as those answering “not wrong at all”, as opposed to “wrong only sometimes”, “almost always wrong” or “always wrong”. For the fifth question, individuals opposed to traditional gender roles were defined as those answering “disagree” or “strongly disagree”, as opposed to “strongly agree” or “agree”. For the sixth question, individuals who believe that a mother working does not harm her children were defined as those answering “strongly agree” or “agree”, as opposed to “disagree” or “strongly disagree”. And for the seventh question, individuals in favour of abortion were defined as those answering “yes”, as opposed to “no”.

The proportion of academics identifying with each of the ten political positions was obtained by simply summing up the relevant percentages reported by Gross and Simmons (2007). For example, the proportion of academics identifying as liberal was computed as 9.4% + 34.7% + 18.1% = 62% (see their Table 1). The proportion of the general population identifying with each political position was obtained by computing the appropriate percentages from the GSS data: averages were taken over all available respondents for the

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The note at the bottom of the page explains that the first and sixth questions were worded slightly differently in Gross and Simmons’ (2007) survey.
time period 2000–2014. The proportion of the high-IQ population identifying with each political position was also obtained by computing the appropriate percentage from the GSS data: averages were taken over all respondents scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test for the time period 2000–2014. Sampling weights were applied when computing percentages from the GSS data in order to attain representativeness (see Smith et al., 2014).

3. Results

3.1. Main results

Fig. 3 displays the results of the analysis outlined in Section 2.1. From top to bottom, the various political positions are ordered by extent of liberal or leftist overrepresentation. Starting from the top, academics are 36 percentage-points more likely than the general population to identify as liberal, and 44% of this gap (16 percentage-points) can be explained by intelligence. They are 33 percentage-points more likely to be in favour of abortion, and 66% of this gap (22 percentage-points) can be explained by intelligence. They are 31 percentage-points more likely to believe that homosexuality is not wrong at all, and 80% of this gap (25 percentage-points) can be explained by intelligence. They are 22 percentage-points more likely to oppose traditional gender roles, and 70% of this gap (16 percentage-points) can be explained by intelligence. They are 18 percentage-points more likely to identify as Democrat, and 13% of this gap (2.4 percentage-points) can be explained by intelligence. They are 17 percentage points more likely to support reducing inequality, and 0% of this gap can be explained by intelligence. They are 5 percentage-points more likely to believe that a mother working does not harm her children, and 100% of this gap can be explained by intelligence. They are 8 percentage-points less likely to support not reducing inequality, and 0% of this gap can be explained by intelligence. They are 13 percentage-points less likely to identify as Republican, and 11% (1.3 percentage-points) of this gap can be explained by intelligence. Finally, they are 15 percentage-points less likely to identify as conservative, and 23% (3.5 percentage-points) of this gap can be explained by intelligence. The raw percentages from which Fig. 3 was constructed, along with confidence intervals, are provided in Appendix A.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the results in Fig. 3. First, consistent with decades of previous research, liberals and leftists are indeed overrepresented in American academia. Second, intelligence can explain some but not all of this overrepresentation. Third, the fraction of the overrepresentation that can be explained by intelligence differs noticeably from one issue to another. Overall, intelligence may account for: most of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issues of abortion, homosexuality and traditional gender roles; none of the disparity on the issue of income inequality (but see Section 3.2); less than half the disparity on liberal versus conservative ideology; and much less than half the disparity on Democrat versus Republican identity.

3.2. Caveat concerning the issue of income inequality

As noted in Section 2.4, Gross and Simmons’ (2007) do not explain how they recoded the original seven-point scale for the question on income inequality into their three-category schema. I defined individuals in favour of reducing inequality as those answering “1” or “2” on the seven-point scale, and individuals opposed to reducing inequality as those answering “6” or “7”. In other words, I assumed that Gross and Simmons (2007) had recoded: “1” or “2” into “reduce inequality”, “3”, “4” and “5” into “neither”, and “6” and “7” into “don’t reduce inequality”. The reason I did so is illustrated in Fig. 4, which compares the results that obtain under my original coding (i.e., the results displayed in Fig. 3) to the results that obtain under an alternative coding where individuals in favour of reducing inequality are defined as those answering “1”, “2” or “3”, and individuals opposed to reducing inequality as those answering “5”, “6” or “7”. Under my original coding, academics are both appreciably more likely than the general population to support reducing inequality and appreciably less likely to support not reducing inequality. Under the alternative coding by contrast, they are about as likely as the general population to support reducing inequality but are massively less likely to support not reducing inequality. It seems rather implausible that there would be such a small difference at one end of the seven-point scale and such a vast difference at the other. I therefore believe it is more likely that Gross and Simmons’ (2007) employed my original coding than that they employed the alternative one. However, if they in fact employed the alternative coding, then intelligence may explain 100% of the only ~1 percentage-point gap on reducing inequality, while still explaining none of the ~21 percentage-point gap on not reducing inequality.

3.3. Sensitivity to an alternative definition of the high-IQ population

As noted in Section 2.3, I defined the high-IQ population as the roughly 4% of GSS respondents who scored 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test, a score of 10 equating to a mean IQ of ~128. However, it is possible (though unlikely) that this overstates the intelligence of academics, at least in some disciplines (see Dutton & Lynn, 2014). For example, as mentioned in Section 1.2, Gross and Fosse (2012) obtained a...
mean IQ among American college professors of only ~115. Accordingly, Fig. 5 displays the results of an alternative analysis where the high-IQ population is defined as the roughly 11% of GSS respondents who scored 9 or 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. Note that a score of 9 or 10 equates to a mean IQ of ~124, which is just over 1.6 standard deviations above the population mean. Because respondents scoring 9 are slightly more socially conservative than those scoring 10 (see Carl, 2015a), in almost every case the percentage of the gap between academics and the general population that can be explained by intelligence is lower. Overall however, the results are substantively similar to those displayed in Fig. 3.

### 3.4. Additional sensitivity checks

The results in Sections 3.1–3.3 were all based on the beliefs of academics on average. Yet, as noted in Section 1, overrepresentation of liberals and leftists appears to be much larger within some subjects, such as sociology and anthropology, than within others, such as economics and military science. It also appears to vary between different types of university (e.g., community colleges versus liberal arts schools). One major advantage of considering all academics together is that it obviates the low cell counts that arise when figures are disaggregated, which may lead to potentially unreliable estimates. Another advantage of considering all academics together is that it is useful to have an overall summary of the extent to which intelligence explains liberal/leftist overrepresentation within the academy; after all, the proportions of academics in each of the disciplinary and collegiate categories are not equal. Nevertheless, Table B.1 in the Appendix B displays results disaggregated by type of university, and Tables C.1–C.2 in the Appendix C display results disaggregated by field of study.

Furthermore, some of the results in Sections 3.1 were based on political positions that had been identified by lumping together distinct response categories (e.g., “Democrat” with “Strong Democrat”). Once again, the main advantage of combining categories is that it obviates low cell counts, which may lead to potentially unreliable estimates. Another advantage is that it averages over ordinal sub-categories of some broader category that may be subject to greater differences in perceived meaning than the broader category itself. For example, there is likely to be less agreement among individuals over what it means to be a “Strong Democrat” as opposed to a “Democrat” than over what it means to be a “Democrat” as opposed to a “Republican”. Nevertheless, Fig. D.1 in the Appendix D displays results for political positions corresponding to distinct response categories.

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**Fig. 3.** Fraction of academics’ liberalism/leftism that can be explained by intelligence. The total length of each bar is equal to the difference between academics and the general population. The length of the grey portion is equal to the difference between academics and those scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. This is set equal to zero for ‘Mother working does not harm children’, and is set equal to the difference between academics and the general population for ‘Reduce inequality’ and ‘Don’t reduce inequality’.

**Fig. 4.** Comparison of original and alternative ways of coding responses to question on income inequality. The total length of each bar is equal to the difference between academics and the general population. The length of the grey portion is equal to the difference between academics and those scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. This is set equal to zero for ‘Reduce inequality ORIGINAL’ and ‘Don’t reduce inequality ORIGINAL’, and is set equal to the difference between academics and the general population for the other three.
4. Discussion

4.1. Conclusions from the analysis

By bringing together data on American academics, the general population and a high-IQ population, the analysis investigated how much of liberal and leftist overrepresentation in American academia can be explained by intelligence. Three main conclusions could be drawn. First, consistent with decades of previous research (Buckley, 1951; Lazarsfeld & Thielens, 1958; Ladd & Lipset, 1976; Lipset, 1982; Brookings Institution, 2001; Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; Cardiff & Klein, 2005; Klein, Stern & Western, 2005; Tobin & Weinberg, 2006; Zipp & Fenwick, 2006; Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman & Lichter, 2009; Yancey, 2011; Gross & Fosse, 2012; Darcy, 2012; Gross, 2013; Solon, 2014; Duarte et al., 2014; Lindgren, 2015; Coyle, 2015; Aspelund et al., 2015), liberals and leftists are indeed overrepresented in American academia. Second, intelligence can explain some but not all of this overrepresentation. Third, the fraction of the overrepresentation that can be explained by intelligence differs noticeably from one issue to another. Overall, intelligence may account for: most of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issues of abortion, homosexuality and traditional gender roles; none of the disparity on the issue of income inequality; less than half the disparity on liberal versus conservative ideology; and much less than half the disparity on Democrat versus Republican identity. A caveat was that, for methodological reasons, the finding that intelligence explains none of the disparity on the issue of income inequality should be considered tentative.

4.2. Limitations to the analysis

There are of course several important limitations to this study. First, the measure of intelligence used was a short vocabulary test, not a comprehensive assessment of IQ. It obviously taps the verbal sub-dimension of intelligence more than, say, the mathematical or visuospatial sub-dimensions. This means that if liberals/leftists have disproportionately higher mathematical or visuospatial intelligence than conservatives/rightists then relying on such a test will have understated the intelligence of the former group relative to the latter. However, there is in fact some evidence to the contrary, namely that the liberal advantage on cognitive ability (Kanazawa, 2010; Carl, 2015a; Meisenberg, 2015; Woodley of Menie, M.A. & Dunkel, 2015) does not show up on tests of mathematical proficiency. Kemmelmeier (2008) found that while conservative attitudes were negatively associated with SAT-V scores, they were unrelated to SAT-M scores. On the other hand, Heaven et al., (2011) observed a negative association between right-wing authoritarianism and both verbal ability and numerical ability, though the association with verbal ability was somewhat larger (but see Woodley, 2011). And Gross (2013) reported that conservative students in the HERI College Senior Survey scored 9 points higher than liberal students on the math portion of the SAT, despite scoring 14 points lower on the verbal portion. Therefore if anything, relying on a vocabulary test may have overstated the relative intelligence of liberals.

Second, as noted in Sections 2.3 and 3.3, a score of 10 out of 10 on the vocabulary test, corresponding to a mean IQ of ~128, may not constitute an accurate estimate of academics’ intelligence. While there is some reason to suspect that it may be an overestimate (see Gross & Fosse, 2012), there is also evidence that more eminent scholars, who presumably have higher intelligence, tend to be more liberal than their less eminent colleagues (Rothman et al., 2011; Solon, 2014; Solon, 2015). Third, survey mode was not held constant across the two sources of data on beliefs: academics answered Gross and Simmons’ (2007) questionnaire over the internet, yet GSS respondents are usually interviewed face-to-face (Smith et al., 2014). It is possible that, due to the absence of anonymity in a face-to-face survey, members of the general and high-IQ population gave more socially desirable (i.e., more liberal or leftist) responses than they would have done had they completed an internet survey (see Streb et al., 2008; Janus, 2010; Powell, 2013, but see Dodou & de Winter, 2014). Fourth, the analysis was only able to show what fraction of liberal and leftist overrepresentation intelligence can explain, not how much it does explain. Aggregated data from two different sources were combined, so it was not possible to examine the explanatory contribution of intelligence to academics’ political beliefs at the individual level.

4.3. Other explanations for liberal and leftist overrepresentation

Assuming the results of the analysis are approximately correct and intelligence cannot explain all of the liberal/leftist overrepresentation in American academia, the remaining overrepresentation (particularly on income inequality, liberal versus conservative ideology and Democrat versus Republican identity) must be accounted for by other factors. And indeed, a number of alternative or additional
hypotheses have been put forward in the literature. To begin with, several related hypotheses contend that liberal/leftist overrepresentation is attributable to some form of self-selection, either on personality, interests, cognitive style or preferences (Woessner & Kelly-Woessner, 2009; Dutton, 2013; Duarte et al., 2014; Charlton, 2009; Dutton & van der Linden, 2015; Mooney, 2005; Mooney, 2012; Gross & Fosse, 2012; Gross, 2013; Fosse, Gross and Ma, 2014). In other words, characteristics that predispose individuals with high intelligence to pursue scholarship (instead of other professions such as law, finance, medicine, engineering or senior management) tend to be more common among liberals and leftists than among conservatives and rightists.

First, individuals who identify as liberal tend to score higher on the personality trait openness to experience (Jost et al., 2003; Carney et al., 2008; but see Woodley of Menie, M.A. & Dunkel, 2015), which may predispose them toward intellectually stimulating careers, including academia (Duarte et al., 2014; and see Charlton, 2009; Dutton & van der Linden, 2015). A caveat is that individuals who identify as libertarian9 score just as high as liberals on openness to experience (and higher on cognitive ability; see Iyer et al., 2012) so this hypothesis would predict that they too should be overrepresented in the academy, which appears not to be the case. Second, liberals tend to be less interested in financial success and raising a family than their conservative peers, and more interested in penning original works and making a contribution to science, which probably stems from their higher openness to experience (Woessner & Kelly-Woessner, 2009; Duarte et al., 2014). In addition, since liberals tend to be less satisfied with the status quo, and generally want to uproot traditional institutions rather than preserve them (Wolff et al., 1969; Pinker, 2002; Levin, 2013), they may be more attracted to professions such as academia and journalism that afford them opportunities to influence public opinion, and thereby shift the Overton window.

Third, drawing on diverse research in psychology and political science, Mooney (2005, 2012) suggests that the cognitive style exhibited by conservatives and Republicans, namely an inflexible predilection for certainty (and corresponding aversion to novelty and ambiguity), makes them ill-suited for scholarly endeavour, especially in the Sciences (see also Jost et al., 2003). Whilst this hypothesis could plausibly explain liberal/leftist overrepresentation in the academy, many recent studies have shown that liberals are frequently no less biased in their analytical reasoning than conservatives, and sometimes more so (Graham et al., 2012; Crawford, 2012; Kahn, 2013; McRight et al., 2013; Nisbet et al., 2015; Brandt et al., 2014; Berezow and Campbell, 2014; Chambers et al., 2015; Toner et al., 2013; Wetherell et al., 2013; Van Prooijen et al., 2015; Crawford, 2014; Chambers, Schlenker and Colliison, 2012; Crawford & Palinski, 2013; Hochschild & Sen, 2015; and see Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; Cofnas, 2015; Martin, 2015; Duarte et al., 2014).

Fourth, self-selection into academia by liberals and leftists may have been amplified by processes of social homophily and political typing (Gross & Fosse, 2012; Gross, 2013; Fosse, Freese and Gross, 2014; Duarte et al., 2014). Social homophily, a pervasive phenomenon in human networks, is simply the tendency for individuals to associate with those who share their heritable characteristics (McPherson et al., 2001; and see Rushton, 1989; Bell & Kandler, 2015). Political typing refers to the tendency outlined by Gross & Fosse (2012; and see Gross, 2013; Fosse, Gross & Ma, 2014) for certain occupations to develop a reputation as being suitable for either liberals or conservatives, just as certain occupations have developed a reputation as being suitable for either men or women. For example, while academia may be heavily skewed toward liberals and leftists, the military is heavily skewed toward conservatives, especially at the highest ranks (Urben, 2010; Tilghman, 2012; Dinan, 2012).10 Logically of course, neither social homophily nor political typing can explain the initial skew toward liberals/leftists that would have been required for the two processes to get started. One obvious possibility is that the initial skew came about via self-selection on intelligence or personality. Indeed, network models show that extremely skewed, power-law distributions can emerge from small, antecedent non-uniformities if new vertices preferentially attach to those that are already well-connected (Barabási & Albert, 1999; Papadopoulos, Kitsak, Serrano, Boguña and Krioukov, 2012).

A fifth self-selection-based explanation for liberal/leftist overrepresentation in the academy, albeit a highly speculative one, is that individuals with egalitarian views tend to be smaller in stature and physically weaker than their rightist counterparts (see Sell et al., 2012; Petersen et al., 2013; see also Price et al., 2015).11 For example, Sell et al., (2012) documented that, within the strongly Democrat-leaning Hollywood film-industry, action stars (particularly those known for their masculinity or machismo, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis and Clint Eastwood) tend to support the Republican Party. And in three different samples, Petersen et al., (2013) observed an interaction effect whereby physical strength was associated with higher support for redistribution among men of low SES but with lower support for redistribution among men of high SES. They argue that men follow a self-serving, evolutionary heuristic that is conditional on their social position: if their social position happens to be high, greater strength predisposes them toward rightist beliefs since such beliefs would have enhanced the reproductive success of high-rankng males in our ancestral environment (and vice versa for low-ranking males). Under the assumption that strength and stature are relatively less important for advancement within academia than within other high-status professions (particularly business, senior management and the military; see Lindqvist, 2012; Blaker et al., 2013; Adams et al., 2015),12 highly intelligent individuals of limited strength and stature should be more likely to choose an academic career, all else being equal.

Moving on from self-selection, a sixth explanation for the liberal/leftist skew is that academics become more liberal and leftist as a consequence of exposure to prevailing attitudes, values and mores within the academy (Klein & Stern, 2009; Woodley, 2010; Woodley, 2011; Duarte et al., 2014; and see Dutton, 2013; Schroeder, 2015). Individuals who enter academia as conservatives or rightists may gradually (or even rapidly) reorient their views toward the liberal/leftist majority viewpoint, due to some combination of concerns over funding and promotion, peer pressure from colleagues, or simply a willingness to conform. As in the cases of social homophily and political typing, conformity to the majority viewpoint cannot logically explain the majority viewpoint itself; again, one would have to invoke self-selection on intelligence or personality to account for the initial liberal/leftist skew. But beginning with a slight or moderate tilt toward liberalism/leftism, the pressures of conformity could have helped to produce the marked imbalance that we now observe. Indeed, many social settings are characterised by self-organising dynamics whereby individual conformity leads to a reduction in the diversity of viewpoints through attitudinal consolidation (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; and see McPherson et al., 2001).

10 In 2012, five hundred retired admirals and generals placed an ad in the Washington Times endorsing the Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, for president (Dinan, 2012).
11 In addition, when Iyer et al. (2012) compared liberals, conservatives and libertarians, they found that liberals had the most feminine cognitive style, while libertarians had the most masculine.
12 In a widely viewed TED talk, the educationalist Sir Ken Robinson quips: “There’s something curious about professors. In my experience, not all of them, but typically, they live in their heads… They’re disembodied in a kind of literal way. They look upon their body as a form of transport for their heads.” (and see Charlton, 2009).

9 Libertarianstend to be both socially liberal and economically laissez-faire. ‘Libertarian’ is often used synonymously with ‘classical liberal’, though it is sometimes considered more extreme (Friedman, 1962, pp. 5–6). Some individuals identify as ‘left-libertarian’, but this appears to be quite rare (see Valentyne & Steiner, 2001).
dysfunctional atmosphere where key assumptions go unquestioned, dissenting opinions are neutralised, and favoured beliefs are held as sacrosanct (Park, 1990; Klein & Stern, 2009; Haidt, 2012; Winegard & Winegard, 2015).

Seventh, the liberal/lefist leanings of academics may derive from a peculiarity of their social-class positions, namely that they receive low incomes relative to their advanced educational attainment and rich cultural capital (Goffman, 1957; Gouldner, 1982; Bourdieu, 1988; and see Gross & Fosse, 2012; Gross, 2013). The closer society gets to laissez-faire capitalism, the more status, power and influence will be tied to individuals’ earnings and commercial achievements, and the less academics will earn relative to those in other occupations vying for social influence (lawyers, bankers, doctors, engineers, managers etc.). Consequently, academics generally prefer policies that minimise differences in earnings across occupations, the better to safeguard their own influence. According to some versions of this hypothesis, academics embrace non-traditional social attitudes (such as espousing unconventional family arrangements) purely in order to differentiate themselves from members of the bourgeoisie (see Gross & Fosse, 2012). One major criticism of the hypothesis is that many American academics are actually quite well paid. Full professors at elite colleges (which are among the most liberal) typically make six-figure salaries, and they often enjoy more autonomy and job security than their private-sector counterparts. In 2013–14 for example, the average full professor at Harvard earned over $200,000 before taxes13 (Chronic of Higher Education, 2015). Furthermore, Gross and Fosse (2012) found that a measure of status inconsistency, computed as standardized education minus standardized income, “explained only a modest proportion of the political gap between professors and non-professors”.

The eighth and final explanation for liberal/lefist overrepresentation is that conservatives and rightists are discriminated against in the processes of hiring, funding and promotion (Yancey, 2011; Inbar & Lammers, 2012; Duarte et al., 2014; Jussim et al., 2015; Lindgren, 2015; McGinnis, 2015). A considerable number of the social psychologists in Inbar and Lammers’ (2012) survey openly admitted that they would discriminate against conservative academics in paper and grant reviews, symposium invitations, and hiring decisions. Similarly, almost a third of the sociologists interviewed by Yancey (2011) stated that they would disfavour hiring a Republican, while a comparable fraction said they would look favourably upon a prospective candidate’s membership of the ACLU. In addition, many scholars seem to be promoting politically incorrect ideas (i.e., those deemed antithetical to left-wing objectives) have been subject to damaging witch-hunts over the years (Rushton, 2002; Pinker, 2002, pp. 105–120; Nyborg, 2011; Gottfredson, 2012; Lewis et al., 2011; and see Carl, 2015a; Winegard & Winegard, 2015). On the other hand, Fosse, Gross and Ma (2014) conducted an audit study of graduate study directors, and found little evidence of discrimination against students who mentioned volunteering for the Republican John McCain’s presidential campaign (and see Lee, 2006). Yet Tetlock & Mitchell (2015) suggest that various aspects of Fosse, Gross and Ma (2014) methodology militated against them detecting any overt, discriminatory behaviour (and see Yancey, 2012). It is important to note that, like social homophily, political typing and individual conformity, discrimination functions as an amplifying force rather than as a prime mover.

4.4. Overall conclusion

Individuals with liberal and leftist views are overrepresented in American academia, especially in the humanities, the social sciences (except economics) and the arts. The present study has investigated how much of this overrepresentation can be explained by intelligence. It has found that intelligence can account for most of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issues of abortion, homosexuality and traditional gender roles. By contrast, it has found that intelligence cannot account for any of the disparity between academics and the general population on the issue of income inequality. Furthermore, the paper has found that intelligence may account for less than half of the disparity on liberal versus conservative ideology, and much less than half the disparity on Democrat versus Republican identity. Possible explanations for the remaining overrepresentation comprise: self-selection on personality, interests, cognitive style or preferences; social homophily and political typing; self-selection on strength and stature; individual conformity; status inconsistency; and discrimination.

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Appendix A

Table A.1 Proportion of academics, general population and high-IQ population who identify with various political positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>General population</th>
<th>High-IQ population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>[0.60, 0.65]</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.26, 0.27]</td>
<td>[0.26, 0.27]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In favour of abortion</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>[0.66, 0.71]</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.40, 0.42]</td>
<td>[0.40, 0.42]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality is not wrong at all</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>[0.85, 0.89]</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.64, 0.66]</td>
<td>[0.64, 0.66]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against traditional gender roles</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>[0.48, 0.54]</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.32, 0.34]</td>
<td>[0.32, 0.34]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>[0.44, 0.49]</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.29, 0.31]</td>
<td>[0.29, 0.31]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce inequality</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>[0.72, 0.76]</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.68, 0.70]</td>
<td>[0.68, 0.70]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother working does not harm children</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>[0.12, 0.15]</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t reduce inequality</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>[0.26, 0.27]</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.20, 0.22]</td>
<td>[0.20, 0.22]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>[0.12, 0.15]</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.26, 0.27]</td>
<td>[0.26, 0.27]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>[0.18, 0.22]</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[0.34, 0.36]</td>
<td>[0.34, 0.36]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 95% confidence intervals are given in square brackets. In the case of academics, these were calculated from the proportions and sample size reported in Gross & Simmons (2007); they do not take into account weighting.

Appendix B

Gross and Simmons (2007) only report a breakdown of percentages by type of university for the question concerning liberal versus conservative identity. Fig. B.1 shows that intelligence explains a higher percentage of the gap between academics and the general population in community colleges (where the gap is smaller), and a lower percentage of the gap in liberal arts schools (where the gap is larger). Note that cell counts for academics are quite small.

Appendix C

Gross and Simmons (2007) only report a breakdown of percentages by field of study for the question concerning liberal versus conservative identity and the question concerning Republican versus Democrat identity. Fig. C.1-C.2 show that intelligence explains a higher percentage

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13 In 2014, the average CEO earned only $180,000 before taxes (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).
of the gap between academics and the general population in computer science/engineering (where the gap is smaller, or even negative), and lower percentage of the gap in social sciences (where the gap is larger). Note that cell counts for academics are quite small.

**Appendix D**

Only outer response categories (e.g., “Extremely liberal”, “Liberal or extremely liberal”) are examined due to the fact that if more respondents

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**Fig. B.1.** Fraction of academics’ liberalism that can be explained by intelligence when disaggregating by type of university. The total length of each bar is equal to the difference between academics and the general population. The length of the grey portion is equal to the difference between academics and those scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. This is set equal to zero for ‘Liberal’ in the case of ‘BA, non liberal arts’ and ‘Community college’.

**Fig. C.1.** Fraction of academics’ liberalism that can be explained by intelligence when disaggregating by field of study. The total length of each bar is equal to the difference between academics and the general population. The length of the grey portion is equal to the difference between academics and those scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. This is set equal to the difference between academics and the general population for ‘Liberal’ in the case of ‘Business’, ‘Health Sciences’ and ‘Comp sci/engineering’.

**Fig. C.2.** Fraction of academics’ leftism that can be explained by intelligence when disaggregating by field of study. The total length of each bar is equal to the difference between academics and the general population. The length of the grey portion is equal to the difference between academics and those scoring 10 out of 10 in the vocabulary test. This is set equal to zero for ‘Democrat’ in the case of ‘Health Sciences’ and is set equal to the difference between academics and the general population for ‘Democrat’ in the case of ‘Comp sci/engineering’.
chose an outer category, then by definition fewer will have chosen an inner category. For example, if all liberal academics answered “Extremely liberal”, and all liberal members of the general population answered “Liberal” then the general population would appear to be more liberal with respect to the category “Liberal”, but only because all academics had selected a more extreme liberal response. Fig. D.1 shows that, as in Section 3.1, intelligence explains most of the gap between academics and the general population on the issues of homosexuality and traditional gender roles; less than half the gap on liberal versus conservative ideology; and much less than half the gap on Democrat versus Republican identity.

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