



**Citation:** Jones, Garrett. 2008. What is the right number of women? Hints and Puzzles from Cognitive Ability Research. *Econ Journal Watch* 5(2): 227-239.

**Abstract:** This paper comments on the lead symposium article, “Reaching the Top?—On Gender Balance in the Economics Profession,” by Christina Jonung and Ann-Charlotte Ståhlberg. Using evidence from brain scans, mental ability tests, personality tests, and DNA, I show that the representation of women in the economics profession may be largely driven by persistent differences between the sexes in the interests and abilities that make good economists. The easiest way to raise the number of women in economics may be to change economics itself so that it focuses on the actually-existing strengths of women in areas such as verbal fluidity, conscientiousness, and computation.

**Keywords:** economics, women, gender, gender balance, cognitive ability, IQ.

**JEL Codes:** J16, J7, A11, A14