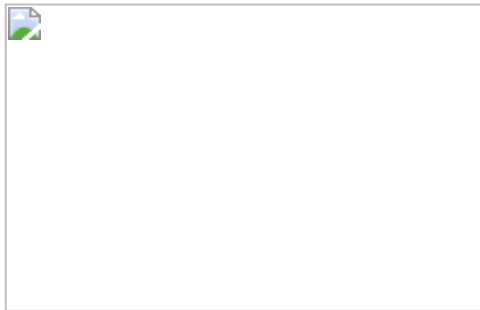


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Why Do Married Men Earn More Than Single Guys Doing the Same Job?



BY S. MINTZ
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In the annals of wage discrimination, a so-called marriage premium for men seldom gets much traction outside academic circles. Experts have for decades acknowledged that men who are married earn more on average than bachelors who do similar work.



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center-even in 2011-on a spouse at his productivity at work. Of the husbands run households. But e on extra time.

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Is there a basic bias going on? Are married men getting the proverbial free lunch? Sidestepping a loaded question, maybe in a world where rules are fair and family expenses soar through the roof we should get more automatically. But the world is not fair, so I find it odd that life appears to bestow a free lunch on anyone, married or single.

Are Married Men More Productive Than Single Men?

Economists have yet to come up with good answers for this. The exploration of this topic has relied on fuzzy data on productivity tied to job titles and compensation surveys full of statistical assumptions, where two desk jobs that sound alike may scarcely resemble each other. No one has answered the basic question - are married men more productive?

That's where economists Naomi Feldman of [Ben-Gurion University](#) and Francesca Cornaglia of [Queen Mary University](#) come in. They've drilled into this topic by examining another group of employees that American men can easily relate to: professional baseball players.

To be sure, professional baseball players are different from most of us. But there are similarities in some civilian echelons. Like top athletes, prominent CEOs, politicians, entrepreneurs and lawyers travel extensively, work long hours, pocket lavish compensation, and court winning records in the public eye.



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view, kids and rotisserie baseball or league baseball player. (Sadly, no second basemen on any team activity easy to compare. Likewise, dly at all since the first major

With statistical assists from the [National Baseball Hall of Fame](#) and Sean Lahman's [Baseball Archive](#). Feldman and Cornaglia mustered data for a stab at benchmarking married men's

performance at work. Around 16,000 major league baseball players have played at least one game on a major league baseball since the first game. Trimming the roster left 5,000 players who played a sufficient number of games.

Looking for Answers in Baseball Stats

Besides marital status, "Productivity, Wages, and Marriage: The Case of Major League Baseball" crunched player height, weight, left or right-handedness, age in rookie season, experience, number of games played in a season, fielding position and team managers in addition to routine batting and pitching stats. When the dust settled, the study confirmed that the top third of married pro baseball players since 1975 - when free agents were born -- have earned from 17 to 20 percent more than top tier counterparts who still play the dating field. But as for productivity, the authors found no meaningful evidence that links marriage to more runs, hits and putouts.

If married ballplayers are not more productive, why then do they earn a marriage premium? It's not a free lunch. Feldman and Cornaglia credit added value to off the field characteristics like stability, leadership skills and popularity. Fans often flock in larger numbers to home teams with more married players, the study found. Bigger gates appeal to team owners who sign players' paychecks.

But does that explain a marriage premium for corporate citizens? Hardly. On the other hand, Feldman says that anecdotal evidence - especially from men -- supports an old-fashioned theory. Marriage might not make men better workers, but wives make them better negotiators.

S.L. Mintz covers finance and investment strategy and was a writer of the best-selling Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission Report.



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