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Customer Racial Discrimination in the Market for Memorabilia: The Case of Baseball

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The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Volume 105, Issue 3, 1 August 1990, Pages 575–595, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2937891>

Published: 01 August 1990

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Abstract

Because consumer discrimination can reduce productivity, it is often impossible to tell whether differential productivity is the effect of

discrimination or of differential ability. Detailed data for the sports labor market make it possible to separate consumer discrimination from ability. We use a unique approach to determine whether the entertainment value of baseball players is related to their race: we examine whether race directly affects the value of a player in the market for baseball cards. In contrast to studies that use salaries, there is no room for owner or coworker discrimination. Our evidence supports the hypothesis of consumer discrimination.

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Online ISSN 1531-4650

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