Chinese Head Tax Project: Updates

Amy Kim

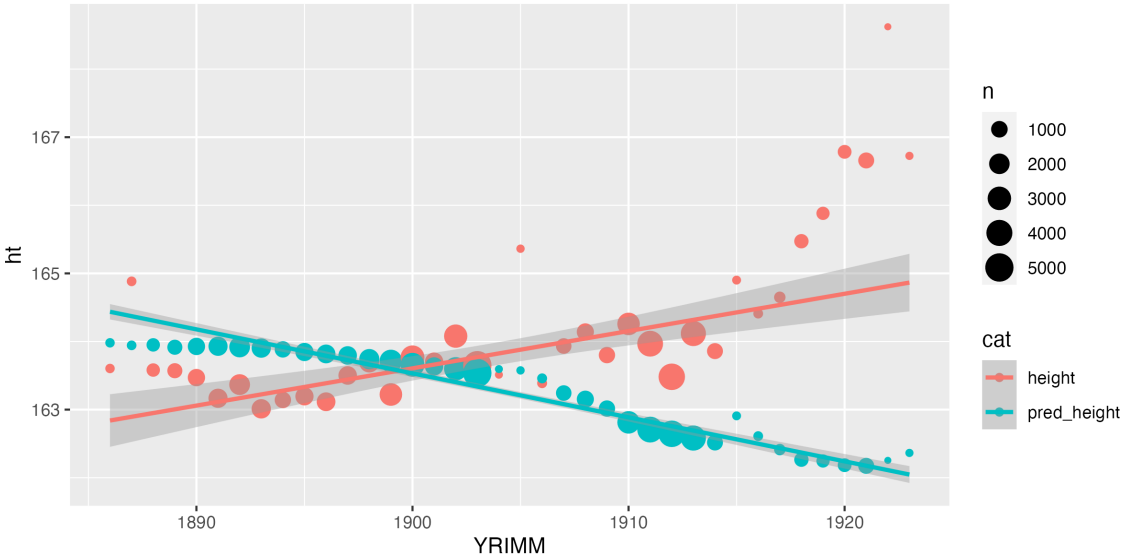
October 5, 2023

Selection on Height: Summary of Results

- **Sample:** Men[1] age 23-50 in Chinese Register arriving between 1885 and 1923 (sample is young, so this is approx. half of sample)
- **Results from Data:** Chinese immigrants get taller and younger over time
  ▸ Height Plot ▸ Age Plot
- **Results from Baten et al. 2010:** Decrease in height of birth cohorts from 1850-1890 (younger Chinese men are shorter) ▸ Figure from Paper
- **Implication:** increasingly positive selection on height (although precise link to head tax unclear) – can show this by plotting avg. height over time against avg. *predicted* height based on Baten et al. 2010 birth cohort estimates from AUS

[1] Results for women: far smaller sample (<1k obs), no comparison group, but qualitatively see similar increase in height, no change in age (also more women immigrate later)

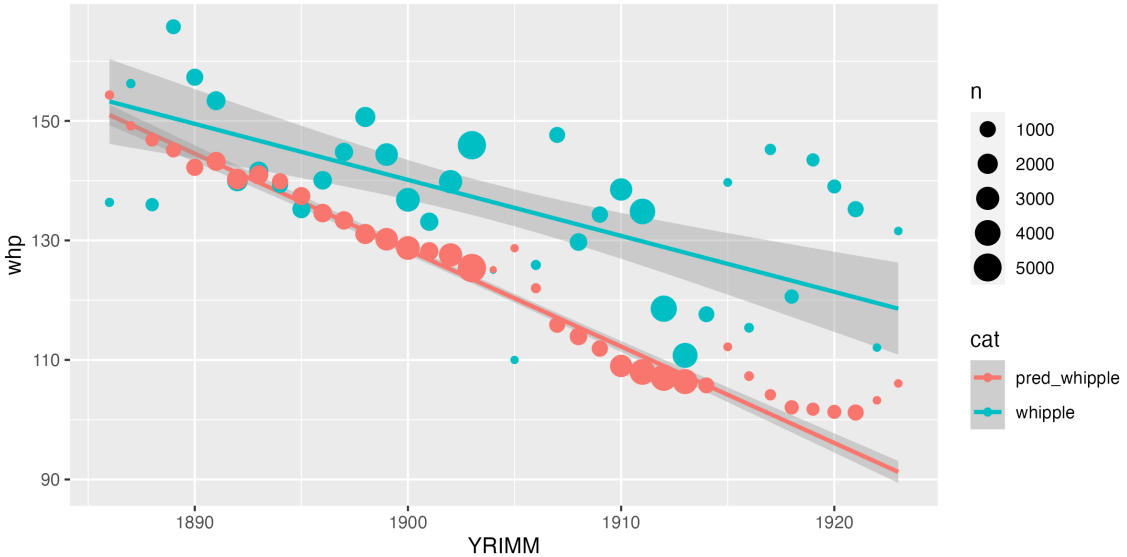
Annual Mean Height and Mean Predicted Height



Selection on Numeracy: Summary of Results

- Descriptive evidence of age heaping (tendency to report ages ending in 5 or 0)
  ▸ Histogram: Register ▸ Histogram: Census (All Imm) ▸ Histogram: Census (Chinese Imm)
- **Key Metric:** $\textit{whipple} = 500 \times \frac{\#\text{ ppl age 23-62 w/ age ending in 0 or 5}}{\text{total }\#\text{ ppl age 23-62}}$
- **Results from Data:** Increase in numeracy (decrease in whipple) of Chinese imm. over time ▸ Whipple Plot, esp. relative to other immigrants ▸ Whipple Plot (Census)
- **Results from Baten et al. 2010:** Rapid incr. in numeracy of birth cohorts from 1850-1890 (younger Chinese men are much less likely to round ages) ▸ Figure from Paper
- **Implication:** contrary (?) to height results – slightly increasingly *negative* selection on numeracy, as seen by plotting predicted whipple using Baten et al. (2010) again

Annual Mean Whipple and Mean Predicted Whipple (Register)



Results on Selection: Takeaways?

- Main conclusions drawn from comparison with Baten et al. 2010 paper, which I don't have the data for [yet?]
- Mostly reinforce takeaway of positive selection that I also find in Census (on occupation and literacy)
- Numeracy results a bit puzzling (esp. compared to literacy in the census)
- How to tie back to head tax? or is it fine to show trends over this period as descriptive?

Framing Project

Option 1: Big-picture framing, main focus on what we can learn about immigration more generally from this one historical episode

- references: Feigenberg (2020) on effect of border fence construction on selection [present day, Mexico]; Escamilla-Guerrero and López-Alonso (2023) on effect of 1907 crisis on selection [historical, Mexico]
- not sure how my work necessarily contributes to the existing literature, other than to look at a different group of immigrants & using cool data
- other papers do have exogenous shocks to migration cost (if not explicitly in monetary terms)
- i find more positive selection due to HT – what is the policy implication?

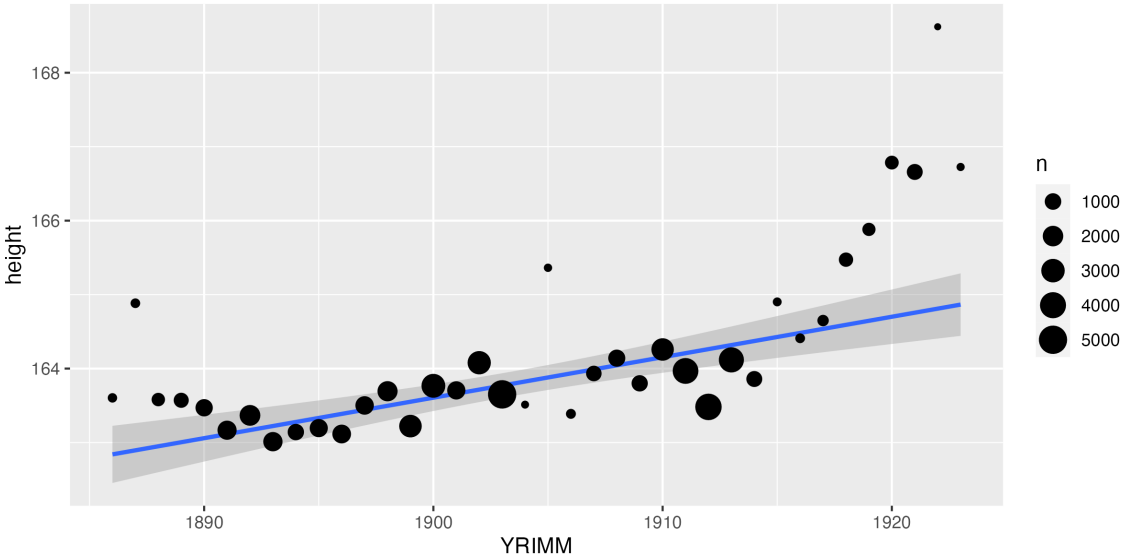
Framing Project

Option 2: More narrow framing, main focus is on documenting trends in Chinese immigration under the Chinese Head Tax

- references: Kanazawa (2005) on political economy of Chinese exclusion
- less general-interest, likely harder to publish
- closer to the reason I was interested in this topic in the first place, more emphasis on how horrible this tax was

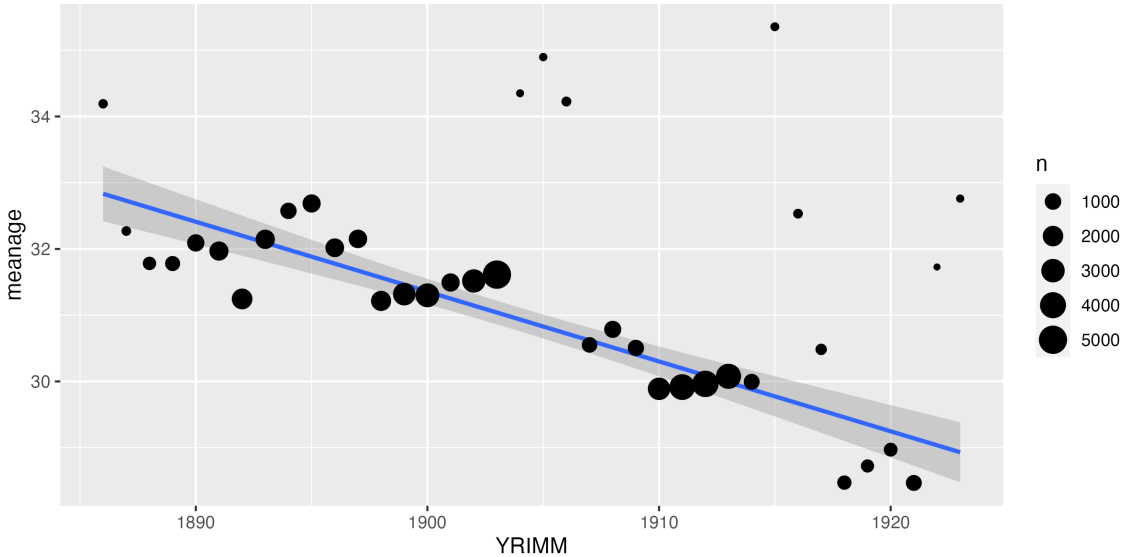
Raw Annual Mean Height

Back



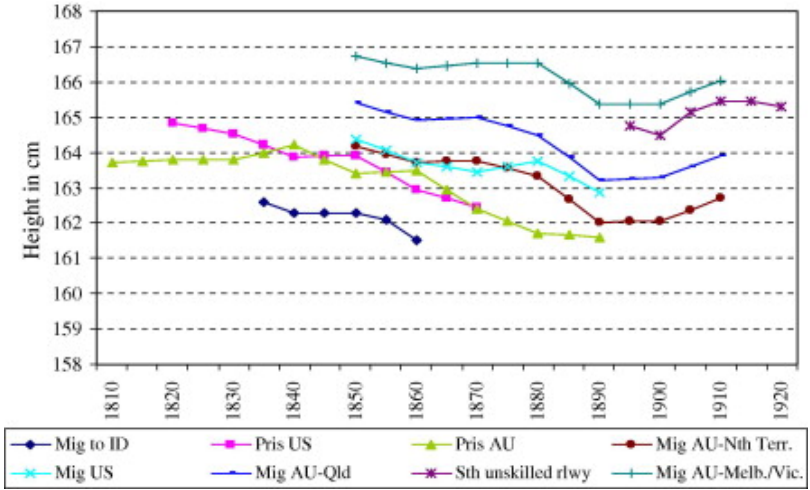
Raw Annual Mean Age

Back



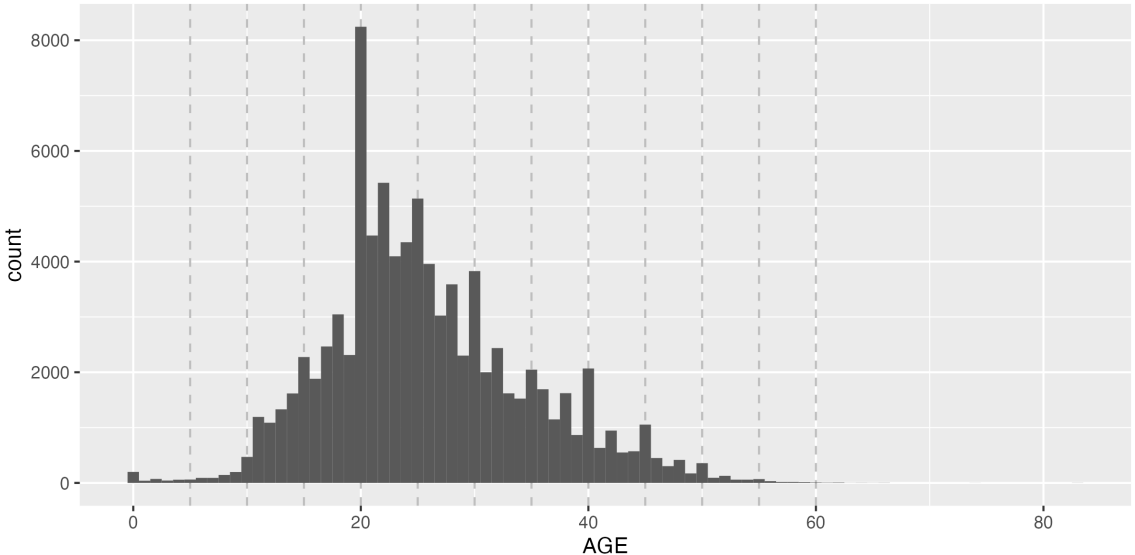
Baten et al. 2010 Height Patterns

Back



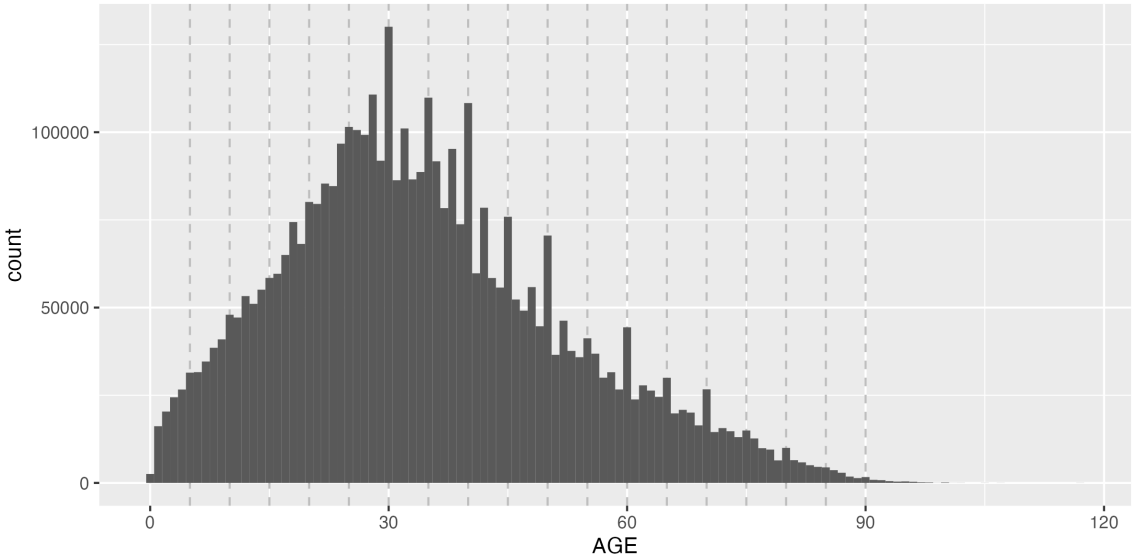
Histogram of Ages in Chinese Register

Back



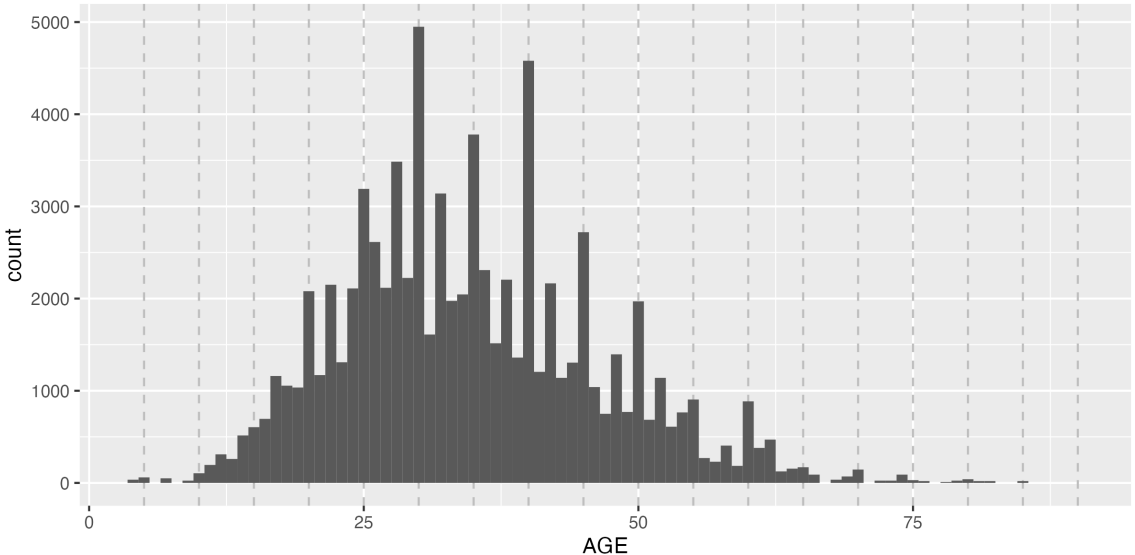
Histogram of Ages in Canadian Census: All Immigrants

Back



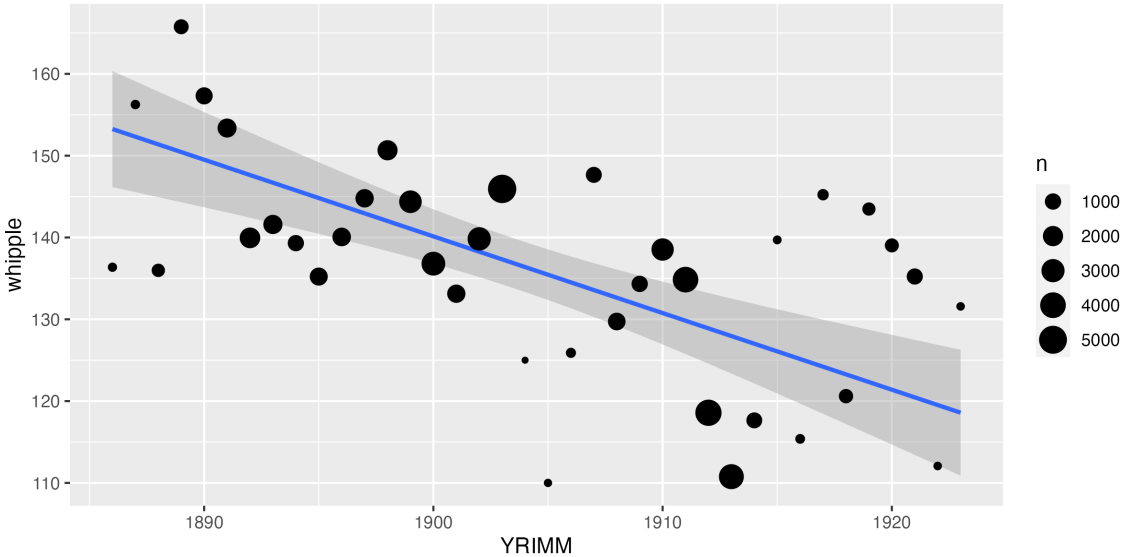
Histogram of Ages in Canadian Census: Chinese Immigrants

Back



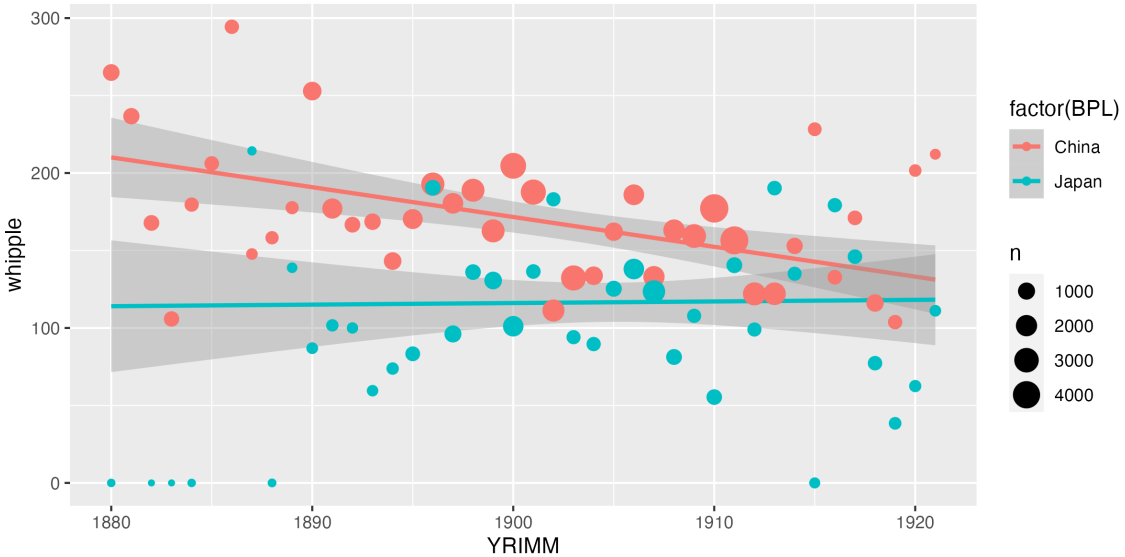
Raw Annual Mean Whipple Index (Register)

Back



Whipple Index for Chinese vs. Non-Chinese Imm. (Census)

Back



Baten et al. 2010 Whipple Patterns

Back