

Asian Immigration to the US and Canada

Background and Initial Thoughts

Amy Kim

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Introduction

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"Model Minority Myth"
 - ▶ In particular, Head Tax in Canada and effect on initial wealth of immigrants

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 - ▶ In particular, Head Tax in Canada and effect on initial wealth of immigrants
- ▶ Broadly, also interested in differences between Canada and US
 - ▶ Similar cultural environments with geographic proximity
 - ▶ Very different histories and legislation
 - ▶ Some distinct differences in racial and ethnic makeup – why?

Historical Background: Chinese Immigration

- ▶ 1850s: Gold Rush
- ▶ 1860s: Transcontinental Railroad (US)
- ▶ 1880s: Canadian Pacific Railroad (Canada)
- ▶ 1910s: Labor Shortage during WWI

Historical Background: Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada

- ▶ 1885: \$50 Head Tax on Chinese immigrants to Canada
- ▶ 1900: Increase to \$100
- ▶ 1903: Increase to \$500 (equiv. to \$16.3k today)
- ▶ Exemptions for students, merchants, diplomats ...
- ▶ Canadian govt collected \$23 million total over this period
- ▶ Chinese population still grew, nearly 10x from 1881 to 1921
- ▶ Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 completely banned Chinese immigration until 1947

Literature

- ▶ Much of the literature on model minority myth is based in Sociology/
 - ▶ 'Model minority myth'
 - ▶ Chen (2015): Skill-based immigration restrictions worsened outcomes for Chinese vs. Japanese immigrants
 - ▶ Hilger (2016): Initially, White/Asian income gap due to discrimination, upward mobility since 1920s due to increased skill compensation (not educational mobility)
 - ▶ Chen and Xie (2020): Discrimination caused slower "occupational assimilation" for Chinese Immigrants to US during Exclusion Act (1882-1943)
- ▶ Green and Green (2014): Immigration inflows into Canada in 1910s-20s had minimal impact on overall earnings distributions through general equilibrium
- ▶
- ▶ Chen (2015):