

The Chinese Head Tax and Chinese Immigration to Canada

Amy Kim

September 20, 2022

Research Question

How did the Chinese Head Tax affect selection into immigration and/or immigrant wealth of Chinese immigrants to Canada in the early 20th century?

Outline

1. Background

2. Data

3. Initial Descriptives

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Background

- ▶ Early 1880s: Influx of Chinese immigrants for construction of Canadian Pacific Railway
- ▶ 1885: Chinese Exclusion Act institutes \$50 tax
 - ▶ Only exceptions for students and merchants
 - ▶ Estimated at the time that average annual earnings for 'Chinese laborer' were \$300
- ▶ Tax raised to \$100 in 1900, \$500 in 1903
- ▶ In place until 1924, when immigration was banned altogether
- ▶ Chan (2014) estimates that the Canadian government generated \$23 million in revenue from the Head Tax (approx. 440 million USD today)

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Canadian Census Data

Year	Coverage	Sampling Method
1852	20%	Random, clustered sample
1871	1.8%	Stratified sample (8 strata)
1881	100%	Full sample
1891	5%	Random sample ¹
1901	5%	<i>Not Specified</i>
1911	5%	Random sample ²
1921	4%	Random sample ³

Note: China was not listed as a country of origin in the data until the 1881 census.

¹Also includes 10% of cities and 100% of all large dwellings and some areas of Ontario

²Also includes 10% of large dwellings and 25% of multi-unit dwellings

³Also includes 10% of large dwellings and 20% of multi-unit dwellings ▶

Outline

1. Background

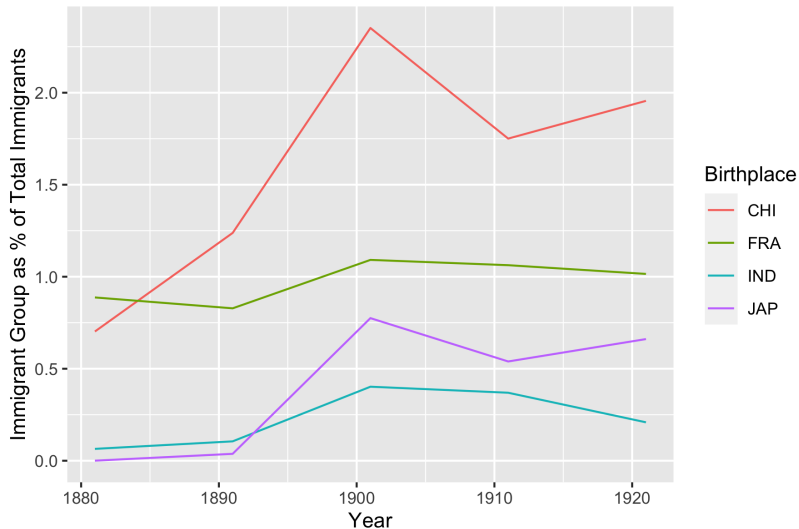
2. Data

3. Initial Descriptives

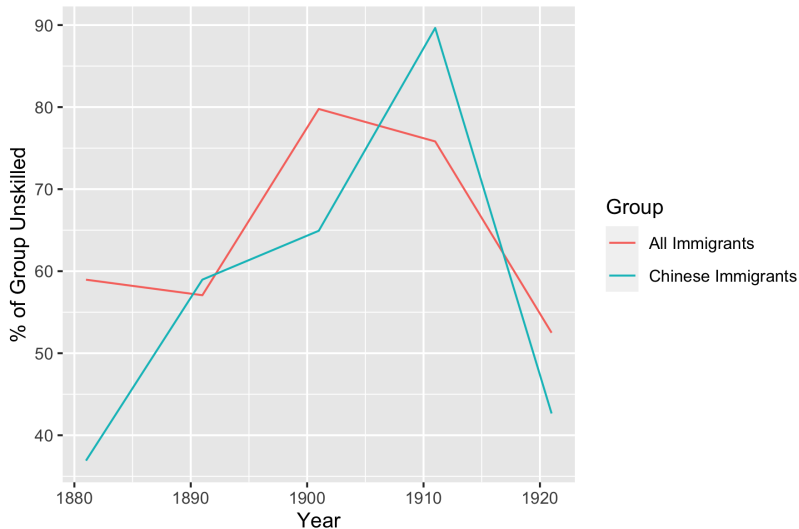
Summary Statistics

	All	Imm	Chi
	1881-1921		
MALE	0.52 (0.50)	0.57 (0.50)	0.97 (0.16)
MARRIED	0.354 (0.48)	0.54 (0.50)	0.51 (0.50)
AGE	26.0 (19.4)	36.2 (18.6)	34.6 (11.6)
Obs.	5,715,448	902,890	10,283
	1891-1921		
CANREAD	0.87 (0.34)	0.92 (0.27)	0.70 (0.46)
Obs.	1,437,638	288,321	5,967
	1901-1921 with nonzero earnings		
EARN	708 (1179)	784 (1212)	442 (296)
Obs.	215,725	69,438	3,018

Percentage of Canadian Immigrants from Various Countries Over Time



Unskilled Workers as a Percentage of All Adult Men for Chinese vs. All Immigrants



Percentage of Canadian Immigrants from China by Year of Immigration for 1901-1921 Censuses

