

# Sweet Unbinding: Sugarcane Cultivation and the Demise of Foot-binding

## Introduction Report

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### 1. What is the main question(s) raised in the paper (the issue)?

This paper is studying the effect of sugarcane cultivation on female foot-unbinding in the early twentieth century in Taiwan.

### 2. Why should we care about it (the significance)?

Foot-binding is a traditional custom in China and Taiwan in the old times. It can harm females' physical and mental health, mobility, and the right to do outdoor activities.

There are still many customs that are harmful and unfair to women in many countries (especially in African countries). By studying the effect of sugarcane cultivation on female foot-unbinding in Taiwan, we can have a chance to see increasing demand of female workers as a way of eliminating harmful and unfair customs on women.

### 3. What is the author's answer (the findings)?

A rapid cultivation of sugarcane in the early twentieth century of Taiwan caused a large increase of demand in female labor. Foot-binding became a costly custom, and women started to unbind their feet. The unreasonable custom no longer exists because of economic motives.

### 4. How did the author get there (the strategy)?

This paper first uses OLS to estimate, then uses 2SLS, and cane railroad, a railroad built only for transporting sugarcane, as an instrumental variable. There are two outcomes variables in the regression. One is the proportion of unbound women among women who has ever had foot-binding, another one is the proportion of foot-bound women among all women who are Hoklo.