

Colonial Governmentality and Modernity in Colonial War: Mobilization of “Baojia Coolie” in 1914

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the mobilization of coolies (人夫、苦力) during the Taroko War in 1914. Using official documents and diaries, it re-examines the effectiveness of modern governmentality in the Japanese Colonial period from two perspectives. One is how mobilization rooted in the bureaucratic system worked effectively in local society; and the other is whether the modern infrastructure at that time as the prerequisite for mobilization was complete and thorough.

From the first perspective, it is clear that the sub-prefecture (支廳), connecting the bureaucratic system with the local society, was responsible for the initial concentration and inspection of resources in the mobilization procedure. On the front line, police officers played an important role in stabilizing and revising the mobilization procedure under multiple contradictions resulting from race and slavery issues. Moreover, the Government-General of Taiwan successfully made Baojia bear the burden of mobilization and expropriation through the wartime regulations, thus transferring the cost of the colonial war to the local society in Taiwan.

From the second perspective, the standard time system was forcibly implanted into the local society under the police and Baojia's supervisory control. Furthermore, telegraphs and railways also played critical roles in reducing time and space in this war.

To sum up, this study not only highlights the impressive ruling skills of the Government-General of Taiwan but also shows how Imperial Japan shifted the war cost to its colonies. In addition, it even further reveals the hidden violence of Colonial Modernity from the perspective of colonial war.

Keywords: Colonial Governmentality, Colonial Modernity, Colonial War, Taroko War, Mobilization, Baojia, Coolie