

Creating Citizens from Colonial Subjects: Reforming Local Government in Early Twentieth Century Ireland

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ABSTRACT: Despite the incorporation of Ireland as a constituent component of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland through the 1801 Act of Union, for much of the early part of the nineteenth century, British policy towards Ireland retained its colonial overtones. However, from the late 1860s a subtle shift began to occur as successive British governments attempted to pacify Irish claims for independence and transform the Irish population into active, peaceful, participating British citizens. This paper examines the role played by the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 in affecting this transformation. The reform of local government enshrined in the act not only offered the Irish population a measure of democratic, representative, local self-government in the form of county, urban district, and rural district councils, but also brought Irish local government onto a par with that of the rest of the United Kingdom. Through the use of local and national archival sources, this paper seeks to illuminate a crucial period in Anglo-Irish colonial relations, when for a number of years, the Irish population at a local level, at least, were treated as equal imperial citizens who engaged with the state and actively operated as its locally based agents.

“Increasingly in the nineteenth century the tentacles of the British Empire were stretching deep into the remote corners of the Irish countryside, bearing with them schools, barracks, dispensaries, post offices, and all the other paraphernalia of the ... state.”¹

Introduction

The Act of Union of 1801 moved Ireland from the colonial periphery to the metropolitan core, incorporating the island as a constituent part of the imperial power of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. With elected representatives taking their seats in the imperial parliament in Westminster, it could be imagined that Ireland would have embarked immediately on a period of decolonization and that Ireland’s postcolonial era would have begun. Indeed such arguments have been put forward to explain the lack of colonial discourse discernible in the academic literature relating to Ireland in the nineteenth century.² However, this was a merger born of coercion not desire. In the wake of French collusion with the United Irishmen in the 1798 rebellion, it was clear that, from the British point of view, Ireland required more, not less, supervision. This supervision could best be achieved if Ireland was wholly subsumed into the United Kingdom, thereby allowing the metropolitan center increased opportunities for oversight and control. During the first half of the nineteenth century, as suggested in the opening quotation, the state gradually increased its control over Ireland through the introduction of a range of legislative innovations that deepened the uneven relationship between state and citizens,

reflecting the typical patterns of encounters between the colonizer and the colonized.³ As Andrews stated, Ireland began “to look more colonial than when it had really been a colony.”⁴ Further, in spite of some concessions towards the majority, but oppressed, Roman Catholic population after the granting of Catholic Emancipation, the character of state relief during the Great Irish Famine underlined the colonial nature of relations between the two territories.⁵

After the famine, however, it is possible to detect a shift in relations between the state and the landed ascendancy class. Up to this point the landed class, descendants of the initial colonizers, were viewed as the representatives of the colonizing state in Ireland. By the 1850s, the inefficiency, poor management and inability to pay for famine relief exhibited by a portion of the landlord community, combined with wholesale land clearances, evictions and the ruthless implementation of the Gregory Clause by a further portion, reduced the British government’s sympathy for the Irish landlord class. The famine itself and the illumination of these shortcomings increased the state’s understanding of the role played by the Irish landholding system in fomenting civil unrest in Ireland, while the incompetence they displayed in local administration convinced the British government to further increase centralized state control. As the state began to tackle these issues, a decoupling took place between the state and the landed class in Ireland. Through the reform of landholding, the transfer of local administration from the landlord-dominated grand juries to the partially elected boards of guardians and the overall increase in central state supervision, the state began to stand apart from its colonial partners.⁶ From the 1870s, a newfound interest in the arts, rationalities and techniques of government replaced the mediation of landed interest and the state began to focus on resolving “the Irish question” by pacifying Ireland. In doing so, the gradual process of incorporating colonial subjects as active participating citizens of the empire was begun.

This paper examines the culmination of these efforts in the pioneering and yet little-studied legislation enacted as the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898. The act introduced the first form of democratic, representative self-government for the citizens of Ireland, while simultaneously giving the Irish population equal parity with their imperial counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales. The sources utilized in this discussion range from parliamentary debates and legislation at a macro-level to local newspaper accounts at a micro-level. This combination of macro- and micro- level sources allows for an illumination of the complexities inherent in the everyday operation of local government and the alterations that occur when legislative reforms are actualized at a local level. More importantly, from the point of view of this special issue, this investigation of an overlooked aspect of the state’s Irish policy offers an additional lens through which to nuance our understanding of the relationship between the two territories. The discussion which follows will outline the ambiguous position of Ireland in the late nineteenth century before examining the rationale behind the reform of local government and providing an overview of the provisions enacted by the legislation. This investigation will allow for an examination of the extent to which the introduction of the act can be considered a watershed marking the true transition in the treatment of the Irish population from colonial subjects to citizens of the imperial state.

An ambiguous position – imperial core or colony

The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 was part of the second of two markedly different approaches taken by successive Liberal and Conservative governments in addressing “the Irish question” and which defined the state’s Irish policy from the late 1860s into the early twentieth century. Both parties sought to complete the incorporation of the Irish population into the state, a process that had begun with the Act of Union, through a systematic engagement with Irish grievances and demands that were seen as barriers to peaceful co-existence between the

two territories. Conversely, coincident with this was the increasing strength of the nationalist movement in Ireland which campaigned for independence, much to the consternation of the government and the unionist population across Ireland. This contest for supremacy between the juxtaposing ideals of nationalism and imperialism formed the basis of relations between Ireland and Great Britain up to the creation of the Free State in 1922, threatening and eventually undermining the imperial center. Further, the uniquely ambiguous position of Ireland as neither entirely subsumed within the core nor sufficiently distanced to be considered a colony ensured that “Irish nationalism posed a direct challenge to the integrity of two spatial units to which British loyalties were addressed: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the British Empire of Great Britain and its colonies.”⁷

In discussing the Home Rule movement and the eventual partition of Ireland, Anderson and O’Dowd examined the conflict arising from the competing ideals of nationalism and imperialism in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁸ Their work situated the Irish question in its wider, international context as part of the growth of nation-states and the demise of imperialism. Crucially, however, they highlighted the interdependent nature of these two differing political viewpoints, drawing attention to the facts that imperial cores were themselves nation-states who often practiced “a form of schizophrenia, ‘nationalist’ at home, ‘imperialist’ abroad” and that the interactions between imperialism and nationalism have shaped the modern states and nations which emerged.⁹ This interaction and negotiation between imperial and national ideals is clearly identifiable in the Irish context from the 1870s onwards. The introduction to Westminster of a united group of Irish-nationalist MPs in the form of the Irish Parliamentary Party not only brought nationalist demands directly to the imperial center but also, through the political tactics they implemented, forced the imperial center to engage to some extent with these demands, if only to allow the ordinary business of government to continue.¹⁰

For the imperial core, these tactics represented a direct threat to the stability and smooth running of the empire and necessitated the state’s engagement with new techniques to manage the Irish situation and to further the aim of the full assimilation of the Irish population as imperial citizens. For Foucault, this focus on population and the security of the state is typical of the evolution of the arts of government he outlined throughout his lecture series entitled *Security, Territory and Population* delivered at the Collège de France in 1978.¹¹ Initially envisioned as a furtherance of the discussion of biopower introduced in the earlier series *Society Must be Defended*, this series experienced a shift in focus in the fourth lecture when Foucault’s attention turned to the issue of governmentality. Indeed, by the end of this lecture Foucault wished to change the name of the series to “a history of ‘governmentality’.”¹² Throughout the course, Foucault examined the changes that had occurred in the style and arts of governing populations: from sovereignty, in the sixteenth century, as illustrated by Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, through political economy (which he also refers to as discipline), depicted by Rousseau’s *Encyclopedia* article, to the development in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries of governmentality. He dismissed the idea of a distinct break between one art of government and another, suggesting instead the existence of a triangle encompassing sovereignty, discipline and government, “which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism.”¹³ It was this shift in focus from the individual to the population which Foucault viewed as the key innovation, necessitating the formulation of new governmental techniques. In order to control a body of people, the state required knowledge about that body, thereby introducing a new impetus to the collection of “statistics” – meaning the science of the state. With the development of statistical techniques, the population became a quantifiable object, revealing that populations have their own patterns of disease, scarcity, wealth, and poverty, which must be understood before any new methods can be “employed as the state both represents and intervenes in the domains it seeks to govern.”¹⁴

These ideas have proven hugely influential within geography, as evidenced by the substantial corpus of texts which utilize and invoke Foucault as a theoretical basis, particularly

in studies investigating the complex interrelationships between space, place and territory and power, knowledge and government.¹⁵ Indeed Foucault recognized the importance of geography within his work when he stated, "Geography must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of my concerns."¹⁶ Given this admission, a major gap in Foucault's work—the lack of meaningful analysis of colonialism and colonial power relations—is all the more surprising. In this context, Foucault's Eurocentrism and lack of engagement with the colonial context has led to much criticism of his work. Nevertheless, as Stoler has pointed out, this has in no way prevented the saturation of the field of colonial studies with research that draws on and develops Foucault's writings as an analytical framework.¹⁷ Legg's examination of the "absent presence of colonialism in Foucault" offers a nuanced critique of Foucault's engagement with colonial and postcolonial contexts, drawing out the passing references which Foucault made to these issues for more detailed study and examination.¹⁸ However, as he outlines, it is the work of others in applying Foucault to different colonial contexts that has been most fruitful. Ireland has only recently become the object of such foucauldian colonial studies through the work of Morrissey and Nally and it is to these works that this study seeks to add.¹⁹

The collection of statistics became a major feature of state policy in Ireland in the nineteenth century as the state refocused its attention from the territory of Ireland to its population. This effort has bequeathed "a comprehensive array of government-sponsored topographic maps, inventories of property valuations, statistical databases of population and demography, inventories of placenames and administrative units, surveys of bogs and mineral resources, and scores of parliamentary reports on a diverse range of social, economic and development issues."²⁰ The knowledge thus gathered was then fed into legislative innovations designed to govern, in Foucault's terms, the "conduct of conduct" of the Irish population, which also included additional mechanisms for knowledge gathering and surveillance.²¹ As Legg has outlined in the case of India, this form of government allows the state to attempt "to shape, guide or affect personal action without the use of physical force."²² Armed with sufficient knowledge about a population, Foucault argued that the population then becomes an object in the hands of the government, "aware of what it wants and unaware of what is being done to it."²³ Indeed, this might well be the case in a country where the legitimacy of the state is uncontested, however, in late nineteenth-century Ireland, the legitimacy of the state was very much contested. As such, every new legislative development was subjected to detailed examination and investigation, if not by everyone then certainly by their elected representatives in Westminster. In addition, the existence of a physical-force nationalist tradition ensured that outright violence was an ever-present threat challenging state authority. In this way, Foucault's comment that "there is no power without potential refusal or revolt" holds particular resonance in the context of nineteenth-century Ireland.²⁴

This active and potentially violent opposition to state aims and techniques, alongside the presence of Irish elected representatives in Westminster, challenges the imposition of a thin colonial narrative over Ireland in the nineteenth century. In the early years under the Union, instances of oppression and inequality were rife and it is fair to state that the Irish MPs were members of the colonial ruling class and entirely unrepresentative of the wider population. Ruane defines colonialism as:

[T]he intrusion into and conquest of an inhabited territory by the representatives (formal or informal) of an external power; the displacement of the native inhabitants (elites and/or commoners) from resources and positions of power; the subsequent exercise of economic, political, and cultural control over the territory and native population by the intruders and their descendants, in their own interests and in the name and interests of the external power.²⁵

By these parameters, it would be fair to conclude that Ireland in the early nineteenth century was indeed more a colony than a properly integrated part of the core. Economic relations also support this assertion as outlined by Slater and McDonough, who use Marx's analysis of the Irish question to argue that there was an enforced feudalization of Irish agriculture and a maintenance of Ireland's colonial status through economic dependency.²⁶ However, their discussion ends in 1867 before the radical changes in land ownership and tenant rights of the later part of the century. In addition, the aforementioned reforms in religious equality, the increase in the franchise and the introduction of the secret ballot act ensured that by the 1870s Irish representatives in Westminster were more properly representatives of the native population, if not necessarily natives themselves. Any discussion of the colonial status of Ireland under the Union must consider this evolution of relations between the territories and should consider this later part when Liberal and Conservative governments alike actively sought to pacify and assimilate the Irish population with concessions to Irish autonomy.

This stage in colonial relations began in December 1868, when newly confirmed Prime Minister William Gladstone stated, "my mission is to pacify Ireland," a phrase which became synonymous with his leadership of the Liberal government in Westminster.²⁷ This was not solely a statement of conciliatory intent, as it came in the immediate aftermath of the abortive Fenian Rising of 1867, which saw Fenian attacks on English soil for the first time. Gladstone initiated his policy with the introduction of religious equality through the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 and an attempt to tackle the land question through the Land Act of 1870. However, the land question would not be so easily solved. The agricultural crisis of the late 1870s led to the onset of the Land War in Ireland and the emergence of a united nationalist movement melding together for the first time all shades of Irish nationalism.²⁸ This proved a powerful combination as the strength of the mass movement forced the state to address the grievances expressed. The state was naturally unwilling to bow to the threat of violence and engaged in a two-fold process of coercion and conciliation. This allowed the state to maintain its integrity, while also engaging with and meeting some of the most significant demands of the population, including more far-reaching land reforms. While the negotiation and eventual compromise with nationalist demands can be seen as evidence of the colony being brought ever further into the core, the coercion legislation equally stands as evidence of the continued use of oppressive colonial powers.

Within Ireland, the Land War simply added momentum to the campaign to distance Ireland from the imperial core through the establishment of a Home Rule parliament in Dublin. The movement received an additional boost when Gladstone and the Liberals entered into coalition with the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1886, with Irish Parliamentary Party support conditional on the introduction of a Home Rule bill. This bill was ultimately and unsurprisingly unsuccessful, but the speed with which it had almost become a reality shocked the unionist population in Ireland, who sought out the support of the Conservative Party and mobilized their own counter-campaign. The Liberals' pragmatic approach to Home Rule was not shared by the Conservatives, who viewed any attempt to reduce the strength of the Union as a direct attack on the empire. For their part, from the 1880s onwards the Conservative Party engaged in a policy designed to conciliate nationalists to their position within the imperial center by addressing each particular grievance and improving living conditions in Ireland more generally. This policy, known as constructive unionism or "killing home rule by kindness," saw the introduction of a further range of Ireland-specific legislation including additional land reform measures, funding for the provision of light railways and the establishment of the Congested Districts Board in 1891.²⁹ These measures, combined with the split of the Home Rule movement (as a result of the Catholic hierarchy's rejection of party-leader Parnell once his extra-marital affair became public), the failure of a second Home Rule bill and Gladstone's retirement, ensured that there was little

in the way of a Home Rule threat left to kill when the Conservative Party returned to power in 1895. It would appear that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was solid and secure as it approached the twentieth century, but nevertheless the constructive unionism policy continued unabated with further measures to appease, incorporate and create citizens of the Irish population. These further measures included the reform of local government.

Reforming local government

The policy of constructive unionism was initially overseen by Chief Secretary Arthur Balfour and continued by his brother Gerald. Gerald for his part was responsible for the Land Act of 1896, the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 and an act establishing the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1899.³⁰ At first glance, this continuity of policy appears merely as a seamless transition of power and politics from one political figure to another. However, a more detailed examination poses several questions concerning the real reasons for the hurried introduction of a far-reaching measure of local government reform in 1898.

The lack of a united parliamentary movement campaigning for improvements in Irish conditions ensured that by the late 1890s, Ireland began to slide off the main political agenda. MPs begged Gerald Balfour to return to the business of running the empire – “Give us a little of England and never mind Ireland.”³¹ Even if there had been a strong Irish national movement, local government reform would have been low on its list of priorities. There had been some calls for the reform of Irish local government in the early 1880s before “the revolt of the tenantry,” as a result of the Land War, saw the Catholic middle classes grasping political opportunities on the boards of guardians.³² With the reform of local government in England, Scotland and Wales in 1888, it was expected that a measure of Irish local government would follow, but the measure proposed by Arthur Balfour in 1892 was considered “so weighted with safeguards” that nationalists attacked it as insulting, humiliating and unworkable.³³ From then on, local government seemed to slip from the radar of Irish reformists and there was certainly no groundswell of public opinion in Ireland clamoring for reform or equal status in this regard in 1898.

Rather it was the imminent failure of Gerald Balfour’s own pet project, the creation of an agricultural board for Ireland, which forced the government to tackle local government reform. The creation of an agricultural board seemed like a straightforward piece of constructive unionism that would lead to the rejuvenation of the Irish economy, but it was introduced just as evidence of financial inequalities between Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom were brought to light. Ireland had been overtaxed since the Act of Union to the sum of around £2.5 million per annum.³⁴ This revelation united all shades of political opinion across Ireland against the government, particularly when combined with the fact that the Irish representatives were already reeling from the government’s earlier refusal to extend the agricultural rating grant to Ireland.³⁵ If, as O’Hearn argued, the suppression of economic activity is one of the key markers of colonialism in nineteenth-century Ireland, then the above fact highlights that this was still the case entering the twentieth century.³⁶ For the Irish population and their representatives, it further served to strengthen arguments about the dependent and subsidiary position of Ireland, reinforcing the fact that despite political rhetoric they were indeed unequal members of the union. If the government wished to introduce any further measures, they would first have to deal with these financial grievances. This necessitated the reform of local government, and it was announced that a measure would be introduced during the 1898 parliamentary session.³⁷

The introduction of the Local Government (Ireland) Bill, therefore, not only provided a means for Balfour to avoid a political stalemate; it also paved the way for the introduction of the legislation that caused the stalemate with the creation of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1899, albeit after a short delay. Further, through the introduction

of democratic, local self-government for Ireland, the Conservatives did intend to reduce the clamor among the Irish population for Home Rule, aiming to redress imbalances in the legislation between Ireland and the rest of Britain allowing for the further pacification of a country that had up to now responded well to the policy of constructive unionism. Balfour and his cabinet, then, were not only attempting the "conduct of conduct" of the Irish population, but also the conduct of the British and Irish MPs who were preventing them attaining their legislative goals.³⁸ In this way the actual rationale behind the introduction of local government reform carries little in the way of colonial overtones. Rather, as Horace Plunkett remarked, it was "'a masterstroke of state-craft' [...] a purely English necessity' for an English crisis."³⁹

In spite of the rationales of governmentality inherent in the timing of the introduction of this legislation there is little doubt that this reform was necessary if the Irish population were to be finally subsumed as equal citizens of the United Kingdom. In the early nineteenth century, Irish local government was composed of two main strands: grand juries which operated at a county level; and municipal authorities which managed the day-to-day running of urban areas. Both these strands were dominated by the Protestant, landed ascendancy and were viewed as corrupt, inefficient, outdated and sectarian, not just by the population they were supposed to serve, but also by the state. The grand jury was selected by the high sheriff from the largest landowners in each county, resulting in public representatives who had varying degrees of interest in local administration, while the municipal corporations "flagrantly neglect[ed] town services," concentrating instead "on the important political function of returning members of the right persuasion to parliament" and furthering unionist political dominance.⁴⁰ The need for reform was tackled in a piecemeal fashion in the mid-nineteenth century most notably through the Municipal Corporation (Ireland) Act of 1840, which simply dissolved fifty-eight of the sixty-eight town corporations that were in existence, while the introduction of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1838 by-passed the extant local authorities, creating an entirely new local authority system.⁴¹

The Irish Poor Law system was based on the British version and as such introduced a new model for local authority administration with the oversight of a central state authority in the form of the Poor Law Commission. This central state supervision was considered necessary to ensure uniform standards and the efficient operation of the new boards of guardians, more especially because the act introduced an elected element to these boards.⁴² This central supervision also acted as a form of surveillance as the returns from local bodies to the commission increased the state's understanding of local patterns and idiosyncrasies. In addition, the nature of the territorial coverage of the poor-law unions introduced by the act extended state power and knowledge-gathering networks to even the furthest periphery of the island.⁴³ As the only form of local authority with central state supervision, the boards of guardians accrued an increasing range of functions throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century while the "former recipients of fresh functions, the grand juries and the magistracy, made no further advances after 1837 [...] within a generation a mass of legislation [...] had fallen to some degree or other, to the guardians to administer."⁴⁴

In 1872, in recognition of their increasing functions, the Irish Poor Law Commission was reconstituted as the Local Government Board. However, the ad hoc addition of functions to the boards of guardians was unsustainable and generally unworkable. Boards that had been set up with only the administration of the poor law in mind had become responsible for a wide range of diverse functions, which they had neither the funds nor the resources to properly implement. As a result, the boards were selective about the implementation of their new functions, and many measures of social reform and government surveillance were neglected. Thus in addition to the need to place Irish local democracy on an equal footing with the rest of United Kingdom, by 1898 it was clear that reform was vital to ensure the proper operation of legislative innovations and also

to remove the tangled, overlapping and dysfunctional nature of the Irish local authority system. It was against this backdrop, in 1898, that the reform of Irish local government was undertaken, rationalizing the existing system of local government, to create a highly centralized yet totally democratic form of local government that finally separated the state and Irish landed interests in local administration.

The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898

There is little in the above rationale that is suggestive of a colonial relationship. Measures were being implemented to ensure equality for all the citizens of the United Kingdom and to improve the operation of local government in one territory. If the intended outcome was to further pacify the Irish population and remove the threat of Home Rule, then this is certainly suggestive of a government formulating policies for its population and improving the security of the state rather than reinforcing any dependent or inferior status between the imperial center and the periphery. This fact is further reinforced from a reading of the local government act and the measures it introduced.

“An Act for amending the Law relating to Local Government in Ireland, and for the other purposes connected therewith” was signed into law on 12 August 1898.⁴⁵ The new legislation was based largely on measures of local government reform enacted for England, Scotland and Wales in 1888 and 1894, but it did contain a number of provisions that were unique to Ireland.⁴⁶ The act provided for the creation of a two-tier system of local government in Ireland, setting up county councils and both urban and rural district councils. As the name suggests, county councils would operate at a county level, replacing the grand juries as administrators of all fiscal and local administration.⁴⁷ The rural and urban district councils were established to operate at a sub-county level, providing local functions at a much more local level. Towns with a population of over fifteen hundred, which had earlier been designated as urban sanitary authorities, would become urban district councils, while smaller towns and those which had not been granted sanitary status would retain their town commissioners. Towns which had never had town commissioners would simply come under the control of the local rural district council. The rural district councils’ areas of operation were generally coterminous with the local poor law union, except where the union spanned a county boundary.⁴⁸ These district councils assumed all the non-curative healthcare functions from the boards of guardians, separating once more local administration and healthcare into two distinct areas of administration. This two-tiered system differed slightly from the composition of the local authority network in England and Wales, where an additional tier of parish councils existed. Gerald Balfour explained this discrepancy as arising not from a desire to create inequalities, but from the advantage of building local government reform within “the existing law and practice in that country,” suggesting that as parish administration would be new to Ireland, this extra tier would “add a superfluous difficulty to our scheme.”⁴⁹

In terms of the functions that these new councils would administer, the county councils were made responsible for the financial administration of local government, in particular the levying of rates to pay for county services. Under the new act the old county cess and poor rate were amalgamated into the county rate, from which the majority of local authority spending would be financed. The county councils also assumed responsibility for county-wide functions, including the administration of county infirmaries and district asylums and the development and maintenance of all main roads. As the fiscally responsible tier, the county councils also had responsibility for the supervision and approval of work undertaken by the district councils. The district councils, for their part, would be responsible for the proper administration of a wide range of local functions. The most important of these were the creation and maintenance of district infrastructure; the provision of social housing in the form of laborers’ cottages and artisans’

dwellings; and the administration of public health and sanitation legislation—covering everything from nuisance removal, the inspection of dwellings, lodging houses, dairies and factories to the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases and the provision and maintenance of sewerage and water supply schemes. In addition, they were given powers relating to the provision of public lighting, fairs and markets, the administration of compulsory school attendance regulations and the most controversial measure to be retained by the Local Government (Ireland) Act, the defence of malicious injuries.

The defence of malicious injuries had been introduced to Ireland under the Malicious Damage Act of 1861.⁵⁰ The Act stated that if it could be proved that destruction or damage to an individuals' property was maliciously caused, then that individual could take a case for compensation against the area's local authority. If the claim was successful, the costs awarded were levied off the county cess of the area where the injury occurred. When this Act was introduced, Ireland was in a state of widespread political unrest; attacks against landlords, the Royal Irish Constabulary and even against lesser English or Protestant landowners were rife. The rationale behind the Act was that by making local people responsible, they would be less likely to engage in, or support those involved in, such activity. Given the relatively settled state of Ireland in 1898, there were strenuous objections to the continuation of this legislation. The Irish MPs were vocal in their opposition, with John Dillon claiming that the whole code was "a most iniquitous law," which was used by the state "in a most unfair and unjust spirit [...] as an instrument of direct vengeance and oppression" and as "a code of coercion against the people of Ireland."⁵¹ However, in spite of such serious misgivings on the part of many Irish MPs, the government refused to relent, and the provisions were transferred to the new local authorities.⁵² This represented one of the few aspects of the legislation in which significant colonial overtones could be identified. This was a uniquely Irish provision for an Irish situation of unrest, an attempt to control the Irish population in a way that differed substantially from the measures included for the other constituent territories of the United Kingdom.

In spite of this, the most noteworthy feature of the act was not the creation of the new authorities nor the functions that they would eventually administer, but rather the fact that these new local authorities would introduce the first form of truly democratic local government to Ireland. The act extended the principle of universal suffrage (as far as it was enshrined in the parliamentary franchise) to Ireland, giving all occupiers, lodgers and qualified women a vote, while also abolishing all property qualifications which had hitherto prevented members of the lower classes of the population standing for election.⁵³ The sole requirement to stand for election to the newly created councils was that candidates had to be local government electors in the electoral division in which they stood. This move paved the way for female representation on the district councils, although they were prevented from standing for county and borough councils positions until 1911.⁵⁴ This opened the field of local government to all classes in Ireland for the first time, presenting local populations with the opportunity of governing their own affairs and removing the final vestiges of landlord power from local administration.

Of course, the potential of this act was not greeted with enthusiasm by the landlords, who constituted the largest ratepayers and therefore the people who bore the heaviest burden of financing local services. Concerns that had been voiced in 1892 resurfaced, addressing the issue of the £4-valuation threshold for the payment of rates. The wealthy claimed that this provision made it possible for local representatives who paid none of the rates to vote for expensive local public works and building schemes. These concerns were shared by a majority of British and Irish MPs and the chief secretary, who therefore proposed altering the rating structure as part of the act. The new act removed the £4-valuation limit, reconstituting all occupiers as ratepayers. In this way, both electors and elected representatives would be impacted by any unnecessary rising

of the rates, while landlords would at least share the burden with their fellow citizens. Indeed, it was hoped that this measure would encourage a desire to introduce frugality and economy into local administration as ratepayers would be unlikely to re-elect representatives who had placed too heavy a rate burden on the local population.

It was, however, also recognized that removing the rate burden off the landlords threatened the financing of local services, as in many areas the level of local poverty would prevent many from meeting their rate demand, creating a deficit in local authority budgets. As a result, the agricultural grant (which could finally be extended to Ireland with the reform of local government) was to be used to compensate the new local authorities for the loss of landlord contributions.⁵⁵ The amount to be granted was calculated based on half the average amount of the poor rate and county cess levied over the three years preceding 1897, estimated to total approximately £730,000 annually.⁵⁶ This piece of statecraft won over the landlords to the new measures, while simultaneously ensuring the viability of the new bodies as functional entities. In this way, the legislation did make special allowances for the descendants of the colonial settlers in Ireland; however, this provision did little to privilege them or allow them further dominance.

There were however, circumscriptions to this newfound local self-government, which could be interpreted as the remaining vestiges of a colonial legacy. These took the form of conservative safeguards such as the compulsory inclusion of three former local authority members for the first three years of the councils' existence and, more importantly, the reconstitution of the Local Government Board as the superintending and controlling authority over the county, urban district and rural district councils. The short-term inclusion of former local authority members was designed to alleviate conservative and landed interests' fears centering on the wholesale handover of local government to new, inexperienced, potentially uneducated and nationalist local representatives. Even nationalist MPs agreed that as the Irish population had been so entirely excluded from local administration, the inclusion of experienced representatives would be beneficial, and the measure met with little opposition. The supervisory role of the Local Government Board however, did raise a number of issues. Concerns about the family and class background of the board's members were raised with serious reservations expressed as to the suitability of the Local Government Board to act as a superintending authority over the new democratic, nationalist councils and the potential for gerrymandering of the political balance to allow for the representation of the minority landlord class.⁵⁷ However, in debates on the lunacy provisions within the bill, the Irish MPs actively campaigned to have the Local Government Board and not the Lord Lieutenant made responsible for the administration of the lunatic asylums. They claimed that it was better to have a board that was answerable to the House of Commons and therefore subject to investigation and examination by the elected members, than a member of the House of Lords.⁵⁸ This suggests that despite serious reservations about the biased nature of the Local Government Board, it was nonetheless viewed as the lesser of two evils.

The position of the Local Government Board was improved in the eyes of Irish MPs with the inclusion of the highly respected nationalist member of the Congested Districts Board, W. L. Micks, as an additional commissioner in May 1898.⁵⁹ This decision was not supported by some of the more prominent members of parliament. Lord Cadogan, then Lord Lieutenant, wrote to Balfour confirming Micks' appointment but conveying his disappointment at Balfour's decision stating:

I have signed the appointment as you wish. I am sorry about Micks, as he is I believe [?] a Home Ruler and a Radical and I do not think it is a good policy offending the loyalists in Ireland. However the thing is done and the less we say about it the better.⁶⁰

The inclusion of Micks successfully negated arguments from the Irish MPs in relation to the biased composition of the Local Government Board, while it simultaneously appeased public opinion through the inclusion of a well-known and respected official.⁶¹ There could be no further complaints that the act introduced limits to the freedom of nationalist, democratic local authorities in the form of a solely protestant, unionist supervisory board.

In colonial terms, Crossman has argued that the Local Government Board exercised a much greater level of supervision over Irish local government than its British counterpart, citing the close involvement of local government inspectors in day-to-day administration and the landed background of the board members.⁶² The former assertion is not borne out in accounts provided by Ogborn and Bellamy, which show that similar levels of surveillance and supervision operated across Great Britain. Ogborn has examined the close supervision exercised by the British Local Government Board in relation to its production of knowledge about diverse territories, allowing the state to develop strategic policies shaped by local specificities.⁶³ Bellamy, for her part, posits the existence of what she terms local possessive pluralism, highlighting that there are local factors at play which must be negotiated in any attempt to introduce state legislation. In doing so, she describes the importance of the dual role held by local authorities as simultaneously representatives of the central state and of the locality.⁶⁴ The difference in the Irish case, then, is not the level of contact, but the fact that the Irish Local Government Board viewed itself more as the direct guardian of the state's legislative plans and therefore engaged in less mediation of local possessive pluralist interests and more coercion of local authorities through financial and other sanctions. Given the contested nature of the state in Ireland and the inexperience of the new authorities created under the 1898 act, this more heavy-handed and less conciliatory approach may have had some justification.

Taken as a whole, the legislation enshrined in the Local Government (Ireland) Act represents a significant step towards equality for the Irish population. Democratic elections would allow for the creation of fully representative local authorities with wide-ranging powers to enact social and environmental reforms, while the traditional stranglehold of the landlord class on local administration was broken. Central-state supervision was maintained, but the composition of the board undertaking that supervision had at least been altered to include one representative of the majority population. Circumscriptions to the new powers did exist, there was some mediation of landlord interests, and certain provisions did still contain colonial overtones. However, this new act more represented techniques of governmentality employed by a state in an attempt to govern its population and ensure the security of the state, than a state undertaking the administration of a colonial other. This act stands as a key point in relations between Great Britain and Ireland, marking the first large-scale attempt to decolonize Ireland, not in the creation of a separate nation-state, but as a full member of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Nevertheless, the success of that aim was entirely dependent on the extent to which the Irish population grasped the opportunity for immersion within the state.

Imperial citizens or nationalist-separatists

In order to gauge the level of engagement by the Irish population with that opportunity, it is necessary to examine the implementation of the legislation at a local level. This section offers a case study of the election process and the early meetings of one of the new local authorities created under the act—the rural district councils.⁶⁵ With the passing of the act, the stage was set for the first democratic local-authority elections to be held across Ireland. Each of the newly created rural districts was divided into a number of district electoral divisions for which two district councillors would be elected.⁶⁶ However, despite the momentous nature of this event, not every electoral division required an election to select their representatives. Elections were expensive and the population in many divisions sought to avoid this expense by holding informal local

selection meetings. Thus the Local Government Board's claim that on 6 April 1899 over four thousand elections were held "without the slightest hitch or disturbance of any kind" is somewhat exaggerated.⁶⁷ Of the 146 electoral divisions in Donegal, there were contests in eighty-four or fifty-eight percent, while the records from four rural districts in Meath show a slightly higher contest rate at sixty-seven percent.⁶⁸ If these figures are taken as an average for the country, they reduce the Local Government Board's total by almost a third, to around twenty-four hundred, an impressive feat for one day nonetheless.

The bypassing of the new legislation in this way did of course pose problems for the democratic nature of local government. In several areas, the meetings were run by one or other of the nationalist factions, and before potential candidates would even be put forward for consideration, they had to agree to the nationalist pledge which stated:

We hereby agree to attend, sit, act and vote at Council meetings with the Nationalist party on all occasions on which a party vote is taken, or otherwise resign our seat if called upon to do so by a majority of the electors. And further, that we will adopt and by every legitimate means promote the principles of the United Irish League.⁶⁹

In other instances, however, the all-party nature of the meetings was celebrated as an indication of progressive and inclusive communities moving forward into the new century. For instance:

[T]he Catholics of Gartan Electoral Division, who had a large majority on the register, selected as one of their District Councillors Mr. Armour, a Protestant ... simply because in addition to his always being a Home Ruler, and a man of the people, Mr. Armour was the best and most capable man they could find in the district.⁷⁰

The lack of state control over these meetings did also offer a platform for the one group excluded from local administration, the clergy. As leaders of the Catholic community, priests were often invited to chair selection meetings and, even when they were simply in attendance, they tended to be vocal in their opinions. In Oldcastle Rural District in Meath, a Protestant ex-grand juror was selected by the crowds but was "vehemently opposed" by a Father Smith, who swore that he would canvass the Catholics against him.⁷¹ In the main, however, the clergy's main role was to make some statement about the opportunity presented by the reform of local government. Their speeches opening selection proceedings were replete with prophecies of the great opportunities that lay ahead for Ireland and outlined their vision as to how the new bodies could be utilized to pave the way towards Home Rule. One clergyman, in Lettermore electoral district, encouraged the local meeting to develop a strong desire to do "what is best and most expedient in turning this weapon, which the parliament of Britain had placed in their hands to the best advantage."⁷² While in Killybegs, the local priest summed up the hopes and expectations for this new form of local government claiming that:

The county [...] was on its trial and was about to undertake a great responsibility. ... If they made the working of the new Act a failure they could hardly expect further concessions in the time to come; but on the contrary, if they proved themselves wise legislators in local matter[s] they might not only expect, but they could demand still more important measures.⁷³

Orations such as these suggest that while the state might hope that local self-government would finally allow the incorporation of the Irish population into the state, the Irish population very

definitely had different ideas. They also show that despite being “under a disqualification,” that “it would take more than a mere Act of Parliament to separate the priests and the people of Ireland.”⁷⁴

Of course these selection committees were successful only when the chosen candidate was the preferred candidate of the entire population. Any person or group of ratepayers who were unhappy with the decision could of course nominate an alternative representative and force a contest to be held. Unsurprisingly, the landed class was not necessarily in agreement with the decision of these selection meetings and, in many cases, former representatives put themselves forward, forcing an election contest. Several of these were responding to a plea by Balfour, issued in his introduction to the local government bill, for the continued participation of the landed classes in local government despite the rebuffs that they were initially likely to meet. He assured them that if they did not “stand aside in silence” and played “the more manly part” that they would ensure that the changes resulting from the Local Government (Ireland) Act would “carry with them a healing power rich in blessings for the future of Ireland.”⁷⁵ This rather optimistic assertion was certainly a factor in encouraging the old local authority members to partake in the election process, while still others believed that their experience as longstanding local politicians would be beneficial to the new local authorities.

As already outlined, these attempts were not always in vain, even in rare cases where the landlord was not a supporter of nationalism. In addition to the Oldcastle candidate, a Mr Doherty of Whitecastle in County Donegal was selected simply because he was the largest ratepayer in the area and had, in the past, always proven himself the staunch friend of the local population.⁷⁶ In contrast, the more common reaction is aptly illustrated in the candidacy of a unionist landlord in the Letterkenny area of the county, who offered himself for election, without the backing of a local selection meeting.⁷⁷ His campaigning met with an abrupt end with the printing of a statement in the local newspaper claiming that “having no personal desire to serve on the county or district councils, and their being evidently no desire on the part of the electors that I should do so, I take this opportunity of intimating that I withdraw my offer to stand.”⁷⁸

The extent to which this reform of local government impacted on the average citizen can be ascertained both by the column-inches devoted to discussing the elections in the local newspapers, but also from the turnout of the local population at polling stations. An initial report for Donegal suggested that turnout had not been as high as expected, with a report that in one electoral division by three o'clock only one-tenth of those registered had voted, none of which were women.⁷⁹ This report was in direct contrast to numerous reports carried by a later paper, which also alluded to a slow morning in the polling stations, but stated that numbers increased steadily as the evening wore on. In Graffy electoral district, in Glenties Rural District, all but two of the electors voted, both of whom, it was reported, were sick. The high turnout there was achieved by the car owners of the district conveying the old and infirm to and from the polling stations, while in another electoral division, people returned home from as far afield as Scotland to vote. As regards the extent to which women made use of their new right to vote, the fact that more than one polling district reported a full turnout of voters suggests that the women voters were as energetic as their male counterparts in casting their votes. Several electoral divisions reported a high turnout of the women voters, while in one electoral division a “very old woman” insisted on being carried into the polling station in order to cast her vote.⁸⁰ Such determination on the part of male and female local government electors alike highlights the excitement that the new legislation sparked across the country. This was a form of local government that local people could really influence, and they were determined to play their part from the outset.

Similar opinions were also discernible in the first meetings held by the rural district councils on 15 April 1899 when “the councils generally dealt in a proper and business like manner

with questions coming before them," allowing for the successful inauguration of the new system of Irish local government.⁸¹ The format of these first meetings was prescribed in advance through circulars issued by the Local Government Board and involved the signing of the councillors official declarations, the co-option of the ex-officio former representatives and the election of the council chairman, vice- and deputy vice-chairman. With these appointments complete, the council could embark on the work of representing the local population and ensuring the smooth operation of local services. It is important to note that for the majority of councils across Ireland, their first representative function was a statement of intent relating to not local but national politics, in a move which was to become commonplace during the lifetime of the rural district councils. The councils passed a number of resolutions castigating the government for the injustice of the financial relations between Britain and Ireland, demanding the provision of a Catholic University, calling for the teaching of Irish to be made a remunerative subject, and demanding a new land act with more favorable terms. Most importantly these resolutions called for Ireland to be allowed self- government in the form of Home Rule, which one council described as the "natural right of all civilized nations," pledging themselves to "continue our best efforts in the cause of Home Rule till the aspirations and labours of the Irish people be crowned [...] by having restored to them their Parliament in College Green."⁸² In so doing, these first meetings in nationalist-dominated areas gave credence to the opinions professed by a host of opponents of the new legislation, that the new councils would be utilized to further a nationalist separatist agenda. Naturally, in areas with unionist majorities or where the councils were reasonably evenly split, these nationalist resolutions were absent.

Conclusion

The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 then only partially succeeded in its aims. In attempting to bring parity to all citizens of the United Kingdom in terms of local self-government, the act was a success. The small inequalities which remained were discernible but posed insufficient grounds for complaint, as evidenced by the lack of negativity voiced towards the operation of local government once it had been established. In fact, as a measure of local government reform, one contemporary commentator went so far as to state that the act was:

[A] model of accuracy, fullness and clearness when compared with many of a much less ambitious scope. The whole of Ireland—topographical, municipal, rural, judicial, political and social seems to have been clearly and constantly before the mind's eye of the draftsman, and the various clauses display a minute and accurate knowledge of every phase of Irish life.⁸³

An examination of the operation of the local authorities created under the act lends further credence to the success of the reforms. Under the care of the local authorities, a raft of social reforms were introduced and administered so that, by the onset of the War of Independence, the lowest class of social housing had been almost entirely removed, replaced instead by sanitary social housing; sewerage and water supply schemes had been extended across the island; environmental standards had been transformed and as a result of these public health and sanitation efforts, deaths due to infectious diseases had declined substantially. The successful administration of local functions bestowed on local communities by the state illustrates the extent to which local representatives engaged with and enacted state legislation. Local authorities grew increasingly adept at ensuring local compliance with state policies and, in time, the relationship between the Local Government Board and the local representatives became more akin to that in Britain. From a purely practical viewpoint, these were local authorities acting as agents of the state in local

communities, receiving cooperation from the local population. In this way, the techniques and rationales of governmentality inherent in the legislation succeeded in creating imperial citizens operating on an equal par with their fellow citizens in Britain and within the confines established by the state.

On the other hand, however, as the preceding section has illustrated, the Irish population showed themselves equally adept at circumventing legislative restrictions and, through their choice of representatives and the resolutions passed at the first meetings of nationalist councils, they issued a clear and direct warning about their plans for their new-found local autonomy. The platform provided for local populations to elect local representatives reflective of their political perspectives was used to great effect, and these local authorities became the training grounds for many who later became nationalist politicians. That the provision of local government reform was utilized by the local population in a way directly opposing its intended aims is reflective of Whelan's findings, which outline the political role carved out by the nationalist-dominated Dublin Corporation, particularly through its creation of a nationalist Dublin streetscape in the late nineteenth century.⁸⁴ Thus, the reform of local government in 1898 did little to alter the ambiguous position of Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the state's perspective, the legislation offered a distinct opportunity for decolonization and imperial integration, while from the Irish nationalist perspective it offered an opportunity for decolonization through separation and national autonomy. These two opposing ideals eventually imploded between 1919 and 1921 in the War of Independence. Ultimately, however, and despite the rumbling nationalist overtones, at a local level the Irish population did engage as orderly citizens with the administration of local government between 1899 and 1918. This period then is unique in that it is the one point in Irish history when the Irish population engaged fully at a local level with the rationales of the British state as imperial citizens and agents of that state.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences who provided funding towards my PhD research, upon which some of the material in this article is based. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable critical comments received from the editor of this special issue, Prof. Gerry Kearns and the continued support and input provided by Dr. Mark Hennessy, TCD.

NOTES

- 1 Kevin Whelan, "The Catholic Parish, the Catholic Chapel and Village Development in Ireland," *Irish Geography* 16, no. 1 (1983): 1-15, 4-5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00750778309478868>
- 2 This gap was eventually addressed by the publication of Terrence McDonough, ed., *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005). Although, as one reviewer commented, "the majority of the essays accept Ireland's colonial status as unproblematic, and as such present an overly simplified picture of nineteenth-century Ireland." John McLean, "Review of Terrence McDonough, 'Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland,'" *The Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006): 440-441. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/504219>
- 3 The majority of legislative innovations involved increasing state centralization of the everyday administration of Ireland. In the period up to the passing of the Catholic Relief Act in 1829, legislative reform was piecemeal, but included the amalgamation of the Treasuries and the centralization of the supervision of lunatic asylums in 1817; the creation of a centralized Board of Health in 1820 and the reform of the prison system in 1826. The

- period between 1830 and 1845 saw a more sustained engagement with the reform of Irish administration witnessing the establishment of a Commission of Education, the Board of Works and the Poor Law Commission. For a more detailed discussion, see Robert B. McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914* (London: Routledge, 1964); chapter 2 in Virginia Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996); and Oliver MacDonagh, "Ideas and Institutions, 1830-45", in *A New History of Ireland, V. Ireland under the Union, 1. 1801-70*, ed. William E. Vaughan (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1989), 206-225.
- 4 John Andrews, *Shapes of Ireland: Maps and Their Makers, 1564 - 1839* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1997), 248.
 - 5 The most significant concession in this regard was the creation of the boards of guardians under the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1838. Under this legislation, three-quarters of the board's membership was elected by local ratepayers, marking a major departure from the landlord-dominated and -selected local bodies which existed up to this point. The colonial nature of relations during the famine is clearly illustrated throughout the *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*, ed. John Crowley, Michael Murphy, William J. Smyth (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012) but particularly in Willie Smyth "The *longue durée*: Imperial Britain and Colonial Ireland," 46-63, and David Nally "The Colonial Dimensions of the Great Irish Famine," 64-74. See also Christine Kinealy, "Was Ireland a Colony? The Evidence of the Great Famine," in *Was Ireland a Colony?*, ed. McDonough, 48-65.
 - 6 The elected element of the boards of guardians was later reduced to half, as compensation for the transfer of the burden of the poor rate to those who owned property valued at over £4. A detailed account of the legislation and financing provided by the state to revolutionize landownership in Ireland is provided in: Terence Dooley, *The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland: A Research Guide* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 97-105; and William Nolan, "Land Reform in Post-Famine Ireland," in *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*, eds. Crowley, Murphy and Smyth, 570-579. Details of the wave of legislative innovations introduced from the 1870s onwards is provided in Robert B. McDowell, "Administration and the public services, 1870-1921," in *A New History of Ireland, VI. Ireland under the Union, II. 1870-1921*, ed. William E. Vaughan (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1996), 579-585.
 - 7 Gerry Kearns, "Nation, Empire and Cosmopolis: Ireland and the Break with Britain," in *Geographies of British Modernity: Space and Society in the Twentieth Century*, eds. David Gilbert, David Matless, and Brian Short (Oxford UK: Blackwell, 2003), 204-228, 204.
 - 8 James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Imperialism and Nationalism: The Home Rule Struggle and Border Creation in Ireland, 1885-1925," *Political Geography* 26, no. 8 (2007): 934-950. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S096262980700128X>
 - 9 Anderson and O'Dowd, "Imperialism and Nationalism," 938, 935.
 - 10 The obstructionist policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party was aimed at disrupting the daily business in the House of Commons in order to force the House to deal with Irish issues. The policy involved the party's MPs giving long speeches on every issue brought before the House of Commons, many of which had little or no relevance to the question at hand.
 - 11 These lectures have been translated into English and are available as Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 [2004]). Foucault's lecture four from this series was previously published in several works as "Governmentality" including in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87-104 and *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 - 1984: Power*, Vol. 3, ed. James Faubion (London UK: Penguin, 2002), 201-222.

- 12 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 108.
- 13 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 108. These ideas are expanded through deeper historical analysis in the subsequent *The Birth of Biopolitics* lecture series, which have been translated into English and are available as Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 [2004]).
- 14 Jonathan Murdoch and Nkil Ward, "Governmentality and Territoriality: The Statistical Manufacture of Britain's 'National Farm'," *Political Geography* 16, no. 4 (1997): 307-324, 308. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629896000078>
- 15 Of particular note are Blake's discussion of pastoral power in British Columbia, Lynn Blake, "Pastoral Power, Governmentality and Cultures of Order in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 1 (1999): 79-93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/623341>; Hannah's examination of the expansion of the nation state in West America, Matthew Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jones' investigation of the legitimation of the English state in early modern Wales, Rhys Jones, "Practising State Consolidation in Early Modern England and Wales," *Political Geography* 23, no. 5 (2004): 597-624. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629804000253>; Legg's discussion of population management in colonial India, Stephen Legg, "Foucault's Population Geographies: Classifications, Biopolitics and Governmental Spaces," *Population, Space and Place* 11, no. 3 (2005): 137-156. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/psp.357/abstract>; Crampton and Elden's edited collection providing an overview of Foucault's engagement with geography and geography's engagement with Foucault, Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden eds., *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2007); Elden's development of a history of the concept of territory, Stuart Elden, "Government, Calculation, Territory," *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space* 25, no. 3 (2007): 562-580. <http://www.envplan.com/abstract.cgi?id=d428t>; and Kearns' forthcoming analysis of geopolitics and biopolitics in relation to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic and the Global War on Terror, Gerry Kearns, "Governing Vitalities and the Security State," *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space* (in press).
- 16 Foucault, 1980 quoted in Cole Harris, "Power, Modernity and Historical Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81, no. 4 (1991): 671-683, 674. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2563429>
- 17 Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, (London UK: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.
- 18 Stephen Legg, "Beyond the European Province: Foucault and Postcolonialism," in *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, eds. Crampton and Elden, 265-289.
- 19 John Morrissey, "Foucault and the Colonial Subject: Emergent Forms of Colonial Governmentality in Early Modern Ireland," in *At the Anvil: Essays in Honour of William J Smyth*, eds. Patrick Duffy and William Nolan (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2012), 135-150; David Nally, *Human Encumbrances: Political Violence and the Great Irish Famine* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011); David Nally, "That Coming Storm: the Irish Poor Law, Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Irish Famine," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98, no. 3 (2008): 714-741, [doi:10.1080/00045600802118426](https://doi.org/10.1080/00045600802118426). In addition, see contributions by Nessa Cronin and Kevin Loughheed in this issue.
- 20 Patrick Duffy "'Nearly all that Geography can Require': The State and the Construction of a Geographic Archive in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," in *At the Anvil*, eds. Duffy and Nolan, 371-391, 372.

- 21 Quoted in Graham Burchell, "Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self" [1993], in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*, eds. Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nicholas Rose (London: UCL Press, 1996), 19-36, 19.
- 22 Legg, "Foucault's Population Geographies: Classifications, Biopolitics and Governmental Spaces," 137-156, 147. See also Margo Huxley, "Geographies of Governmentality," in *Space, Knowledge and Power*, eds. Crampton and Elden, 185-204, where a wide range of Foucault's writings are drawn together to offer a detailed consideration of the "conduct of conduct."
- 23 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 105.
- 24 Foucault, 1981 quoted in Clive Barnett, "Culture, Geography, and the Arts of Government," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19, no. 1 (2001): 7-24, 16. In this article Barnett teases out the existence of references to resistance and dissent in the work of Foucault, drawing on Gordon's work outlining the implementation of governmental techniques in the context of the liberal, laissez-faire state. See Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," in *The Foucault Effect*, eds. Burchell, Gordon and Miller, 1-52.
- 25 Joseph Ruane, "Colonialism and Irish Historical Development," in *Approaching the Past: Historical Anthropology through Irish Case Studies*, eds. Marilyn Silverman and Philip H. Gulliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 293-323, 295.
- 26 Eamonn Slater and Terrence McDonough, "Marx on Nineteenth-Century Colonial Ireland: Analysing Colonialism as a Dynamic Social Process," *Irish Historical Studies* 36, no. 142 (2008): 153-172. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20720271>
- 27 John Morley (1903) quoted in Barbara Solow, *The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870 - 1903* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 16.
- 28 Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005), 77-98.
- 29 Gailey outlines how the tag name for constructive unionism—Killing Home Rule With Kindness—resulted from a quotation of Gerald Balfour's that was widely misconstrued by contemporaries. He stated that the Conservatives would "be glad enough, no doubt, to kill home rule with kindness if we could but, whatever may be the result of our efforts, our intention is do our utmost to introduce and pass such measures as will really promote the interests of the material prosperity of Ireland," quoted in Andrew Gailey, "Unionist Rhetoric and Irish Local Government Reform, 1895-9," *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 93 (1984): 52-68, 58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008026>. The promotion of this tag name oversimplified an intricate Conservative Party policy towards Ireland, which stood independent of this aim.
- 30 Several studies, however, have mistakenly credited all these developments to Arthur.
- 31 Gailey, "Unionist rhetoric," 55.
- 32 Crossman, "Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," in *Was Ireland a Colony?*, ed. McDonough, 102-116, 110; William Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry: The Transformation of Local Government in Ireland, 1872-1886* (Boston MA: Northeastern University Press, 1984).
- 33 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 53, 21 February 1898, 1244. For more see: Robert B. McDowell, "Administration and the Public Services, 1870-1921," in *A New History of Ireland*, VI, ed. Vaughan, 579-585.
- 34 For this figure, how it was calculated and how such an inequity came about, see two papers by N.J. Synott: "Some Features of the Over-Taxation of Ireland," *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland* 10, no. 77 (1897): 251-268; and "Over-Taxation and Expenditure in Ireland," *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland* 10, no. 79 (1899): 404-432.

- 35 The agricultural rating grant was a fund that had been issued to alleviate agricultural distress across the United Kingdom in 1895. Ireland's share of this grant had still not been produced by 1898 on the grounds that the local government system in Ireland was not fit for purpose.
- 36 Denis O'Hearn, "Ireland in the Atlantic Economy," in *Was Ireland a Colony?* ed. McDonough, 3-26.
- 37 Gailey, "Unionist Rhetoric," 61.
- 38 Foucault, quoted in Burchell, "Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self," 19.
- 39 Letter from Plunkett to Cadogan, 12 September 1899; quoted in Gailey, "Unionist Rhetoric," 63.
- 40 Richard Haslam, "The origins of Irish Local Government," in *Local Government in Ireland, Inside Out*, eds. Mark Callanan and Justin F. Keogan (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2003), 14-40, 18.
- 41 Haslam, "The origins of Irish Local Government," 19. New Town Commissioners were eventually introduced in 1854 under the Towns Improvement Act.
- 42 The state had little cause for concern about the elected element of the boards initially. The property qualification for representatives, the cumulative voting enshrined in the act, deference to local landlords and the public nature of the ballot all ensured that there was little in the way of a shift in local control until the 1880s.
- 43 Poor law unions were established as rational administrative units based on approximately a ten-mile radius around a central market town. For more see: Arlene Crampsie, "Impacts of the Workhouse Network and Poor Relief: A Donegal Case Study," *Geographical Viewpoint* 32 (2004): 42-50.
- 44 MacDonagh, "Politics, 1830-1845," in *A New History of Ireland, V*, ed. Vaughan, 169-192, 180. The Medical Charities Act of 1851 removed the subsidization of dispensaries from the grand juries and placed the creation, maintenance and day-to-day running of these in the hands of the boards of guardians, with the administration of fever hospitals. The guardians became responsible for the control of burial grounds in 1856, and in 1863 they were granted the power to register births and deaths. They also gathered a range of functions relating to all aspects of social life including the building of laborers' cottages, the supply of seed, and the prevention and removal of nuisances. They gained powers relating to the notification and prevention of infectious and contagious diseases, in both animals and humans, under the Public Health Act of 1878, which made the board of guardians the rural sanitary authority in their union, and in 1896 they were made responsible for making legislation in relation to the speed and design of motor cars; see: McDowell, *The Irish Administration*, 189.
- 45 This is the full title of the act, commonly referred to as the Local Government (Ireland) Act, which was passed into legislation as 61&62 Vict. c. 37. All the information in this section, unless otherwise stated is taken from the provisions of the act.
- 46 51&52 Vict. c. 41; 56&57 Vict. c. 73.
- 47 The legal functions of the grand juries were retained right up to the creation of the Free State in 1922, although in practice they were largely ignored from the foundation of the Sinn Féin courts during the War of Independence.
- 48 In these instances, the poor law union could be split into two or three district councils provided each portion was of sufficient size to function as a local authority. Where the portion divided would be too small, a redrawing of county boundaries was necessitated.
- 49 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 53, 21 February 1898, 1228.
- 50 24&25 Vict. c. 97.

- 51 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 56, 28 April 1898, 1487, 1502.
- 52 61&62 Vict. c. 37, clause 5.
- 53 The only group actively excluded by the legislation was the Irish clergy in an attempt to keep sectarian and religious tensions off the newly created local bodies.
- 54 This occurred under the Local Authorities (Ireland) (Qualification of Women) Act 1&2 Geo. V c. 35
- 55 61&62 Vict. c. 37, Clause 49 (3)
- 56 Twenty-Seventh Annual Report under "The Local Government Board (Ireland) Act", 35 and 36 Vic. c.69, Year Ending 31st March 1899, 1899, c.9480, xxxix, 35; *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 53, 21 February 1898, 1241.
- 57 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 56, 27 April 1898, 1299-1308.
- 58 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 57, 2 May 1898, 95-123.
- 59 W. Micks to Gerald Balfour, 2nd May 1898; the UK National Archives, Balfour Papers, PRO/30/60/24.
- 60 Lord Cadogan to Gerald Balfour, 30th April 1898; the UK National Archives, Balfour Papers, PRO/30/60/24. Cadogan's request was duly granted as the next appointee to the Local Government Board was Robert Bagwell, D.L., a member of a leading Dublin unionist family, Twenty Seventh Annual Report under "The Local Government Board (Ireland) Act", 99.
- 61 This move was also reflective of a more general trend at the top level of the Irish administration. The gradual process of greening Dublin Castle has been documented by Lawrence McBride, *The Greening of Dublin Castle: The Transformation of Bureaucratic and Judicial Personnel in Ireland, 1892-1922* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991); and Fergus Campbell, "Who Ruled Ireland: The Irish Administration, 1879-1914," *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 623-644. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X07006280>
- 62 Crossman, "Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Ireland."
- 63 Miles Ogborn, "Local Power and State Regulation in Nineteenth Century Britain," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers New Series* 17, no. 2 (1992): 215-226. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/622547>
- 64 Christine Bellamy, *Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919: The Local Government Board in its Fiscal and Cultural Context* (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1988).
- 65 The material used in the remainder of this section is taken from a comparative study conducted on the rural district councils of Donegal and Meath in Crampsie, *Governmentality and Locality: An Historical Geography of Rural District Councils in Ireland, 1898 - 1925* (PhD Thesis: Trinity College Dublin, 2008).
- 66 There was a substantial amount of debate over whether the divisions should elect one or two members. One-seat divisions were passed in the House of Commons, but the Lords inserted the two-seat dictum in the hope that the extra seat would allow for minority representation on the councils. The district electoral divisions had been laid down during the establishment of the Poor Law. The commissioners had tried to ensure that they were almost uniform in terms of population density and area, with a maximum of twenty in each union, while the drawing up of their boundaries was to avoid, as much as possible, the division of estates (Sixth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1840, c.245, xvii.397). In practice many unions and therefore districts, particularly in the West, had significantly more. Glenties Rural District had an elected membership of sixty before co-options took place.
- 67 Twenty-Seventh Annual Report under "The Local Government Board (Ireland) Act", 32.

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- 68 *The Derry Journal*, 8 March 1899, 8. The details in the *Meath Chronicle* for this period are quite poor and as a result many of the examples here are taken from *The Derry Journal*, the only paper covering Donegal in the period in question.
- 69 *The Derry Journal*, 1 February 1899, 3.
- 70 *The Derry Journal*, 20 February 1899, 3.
- 71 *Meath Chronicle*, 4 February 1899.
- 72 *The Derry Journal*, 10 February 1899, 3.
- 73 *The Derry Journal*, 18 January 1899, 3.
- 74 *The Derry Journal*, 15 February 1899, 2.
- 75 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 21 February 1898, 1248-1249.
- 76 *The Derry Journal*, 17 February 1899, 8.
- 77 *The Derry Journal*, 10 February 1899, 5.
- 78 *The Derry Journal*, 22 February 1899, 8.
- 79 *The Derry Journal*, 7 April 1899, 8.
- 80 All of the above accounts are taken from *The Derry Journal*, 10 April 1899, 7-8.
- 81 Twenty Eighth Annual Report under "The Local Government Board (Ireland) Act", 35 and 36 Vic. c.69, Year Ending 31st March 1900, 1902, Cd.338, xxxv, 20.
- 82 *The Derry Journal*, 17 April 1899, 7.
- 83 W.J. Johnston, "The Coming Changes in Irish Local Government," *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society* 10, no. 78 (1898): 366-378, 368.
- 84 Yvonne Whelan, "Monuments, power and contested space - the iconography of Sackville Street (O'Connell Street) before Independence (1922)," *Irish Geography* 34, no.1 (2001): 11-33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00750770109555774>