‘Teach the mutual interests of the Mother country and her dependencies’: education and reshaping colonial governance in Trinidad

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ABSTRACT

Education played a vital role in the shifting nature of colonial administration and the reshaping of colonial relations in the nineteenth century. The activities that occurred within classrooms shaped the behaviour and identity of children towards an imperial norm while beyond the school walls the changing management structure tied various local actors together within state regulations. This paper examines the process of centralising education in Trinidad. While influenced by the model of nationalised education emerging in white-settler colonies, the constellation of local relations resulted in something uniquely different. Reforms in Trinidad demonstrate how colonial governance was reshaped by co-opting non-state actors into its functioning but had to ensure that those actors maintained their field of independent actions to do so. While educational reforms took a unique path in Trinidad, the expanding influence from the colonial centre eventually shaped the education system to align with other systems elsewhere in the Empire.

Introduction

The Caribbean is underrepresented in the examination of the nineteenth-century imperial state and the role institutions played in reshaping colonial structures. Important social reforms coincided with rapid population increase, leading to a socially complex Empire. New groups of diverse citizens had their rights and powers increased, challenging the existing social situation. Management of the changing realities thus became a target for colonial authorities. Governance was exercised through shifting alliances between diverse sets of authorities in colonial projects to shape aspects of economic and social life. In this way, imperial governance was not so much a matter of imposing constraints but shaping the circumstances where individuals and groups were able to exercise a regulated freedom.¹ Institutions were central to this as they define the relationship between actors as well as the distribution of resources among networks.² The establishment of state

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¹Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, ‘Political Power beyond the State: Problematic of Government’, British Journal of Sociology 43 (1992): 172–205.

²Andrew Jones and Aiden White, ‘Governance’, in Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts, ed. David Atkinson, Peter Jackson, David Sibley and Neil Washbourne (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 72–9.
institutions attempted to stabilise social relations, with the imperial state and colonial authorities representing a ‘neutral’ set of institutionalised practices that claimed legitimacy over the means of administration.\textsuperscript{3} The centralisation of institutions shifted relations and functions, with local actors, networks and strategies incorporated into the functions of the centralising state, often encouraged by their own interests in gaining state resources. These actors and networks therefore found themselves connected to and operating under a new social reality in which state regulations shaped interactions. Shifting governance did not occur simultaneously or in a uniform manner across the Empire, and while there were distinct policies in different colonial contexts, these were often shaped by similar strategies from the imperial centre.\textsuperscript{4}

This article examines this process in Trinidad, with specific focus on colonial education. Education was a central technology in establishing imperial norms and shifting social structures. The activities that occurred within the classroom shaped the behaviour and identity of children towards an imperial norm while beyond the school walls the changing management structure tied various local actors together within state regulations. There was an intense period of education centralisation throughout the Empire starting from the 1830s. The reforms followed a similar process in the white-settler colonies, but in other colonies they often took a different path in response to specific local social and political issues. Trinidad illustrates this wider desire to shape education to a certain end and how the central strategy was reshaped through the agency of local context and governance.\textsuperscript{5} The developments in the education system highlight how reshaping relations was the result of negotiations between ideals and desires of actors at different scales all attempting to increase their own interests. The formation of educational systems around the Empire illustrate that at a time where British identities were being forged at home in relation to ‘others’ during the nineteenth century, different kinds of British identities and governance were being carved out in diverse colonial settings between the networks emanating from the imperial centre and the local context.\textsuperscript{6} The article initially explores the wider ideas and strategies behind educational reform in the Empire before examining how this occurred in Trinidad. In so doing, this study will contribute to the emerging and important body of research on the geographies of education, adding historical context to the rich body of studies.\textsuperscript{7}

**Centralisation and education in the Empire**

To understand the changing social realities, it is vital to look beyond the locations of power and focus on relationships through which this power is deployed.\textsuperscript{8} Within

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\textsuperscript{3}Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: British State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

\textsuperscript{4}Rebecca Swartz and Peter Kallaway, ‘Editorial: Imperial, Global and Local in Histories of Education’, *History of Education* 47 (2018): 362–7.

\textsuperscript{5}It is noted that the concept of agency is used uncritically in this work, and the nature of agency is a contested concept with an important body of work that analyses its limitations: see P. Rebughini, ‘Critical Agency and the Future of Critique’, *Current Sociology* 66 (2018): 3–19.

\textsuperscript{6}Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks Creating Identities in Nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001).

\textsuperscript{7}Sara Mills and Peter Kraft, ‘Cultural Geographies of Education’, *Cultural Geographies* 23, no. 1 (2016): 19–27.

\textsuperscript{8}Miles Ogborn, ‘Local Power and State Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17 (1991): 215–26.
education, focus should be extended beyond the school walls to examine how education influenced governance and the wider population. The expanding population of the British Empire resulted in a multitude of social actors all vying to expand their own interests. The nature of the colonial administration changed to manage various interests and reduce social and political tensions. Social institutions served this purpose by shaping behaviour both within and beyond their walls. Within their walls, habits and behaviour were shaped by practices that attempted to regulate the lives of individuals and shape identity. Beyond the walls, local power structures were connected to the centralising state by their integration into the management of institutions. The reforms encouraged various opposing local actors and networks to cooperate, with each other and the colonial administrations, through the interest in accessing state resources. Actors on a local level therefore actively reshaped their own networks but were now faced with the new social reality that required collaboration with the colonial administration to do so. Once linked to a central body, these networks were influenced through the regulatory and surveillance powers of the state itself. However, this was not a uniform and totalising process, as local context and agency heavily influenced the development of these institutions. It is therefore important to move beyond the understanding of the history of the institutions themselves and to examine the nature of relations and interactions between central and local agents. The administration of Empire in the nineteenth century rapidly became an ensemble of institutions, organisations and practices that organised and restructured social networks in order to make the political and economic situation of imperialism work. The interplay between this rationale of the imperial state and the local strategic and social networks at different scales was played out in institutions.

The centralisation of education is one of the most illuminating examples of this process. The first centralised system in the British Empire was introduced in Ireland in 1831, and quickly became the exemplar for educational reform throughout the Empire. Inside the classroom, the Irish system attempted to teach those of different religious tenets in the same classroom. The Irish Board created a whole series of textbooks based on common religious principles appropriate for the mixed classroom, which soon became standard throughout the Empire. Notable for their lack of detail on Ireland, they viewed the world through an imperial lens, refocusing the identity of a child away from anything that was unique to their country of origin and towards an imperial norm. This combined with other elements such as teacher training, standardised examinations, focus on the physical space and regular inspection meant that centralised education attempted to refine the behaviour of the pupils, shaping the individuals to conform to the social and ideological norms of the British Empire. Reforms in Ireland beyond the classroom represented the wider strategy of refocusing local social relations. Local actors applied for state resources to establish schools or transfer existing schools over to the state system. As was common throughout the Empire, education was often under the management of local religious officials, meaning that this process tied the interests of the state to local clergy. Many clergymen became managers of state schools and thus became subject to the regulations of the colonial administration. This also allowed the

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9Katrina Morgan, ‘Representations of Self and the Colonial “Other” in the Irish National School Books’, in Irish Classroom and British Empire: Imperial Contexts in the Origins of Modern Education, ed. David Dickson, Justyna Pyz and Christopher Shepard (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 42–52.
system to use state finance to incorporate existing educational systems, such as those of educational charities and the churches, integrating diverse educational networks within the surveillance power of the state.

The Canadian system established in 1846 by Egerton Ryerson and the system introduced in New South Wales in 1848 were both heavily influenced by the Irish exemplar. It is interesting to note that state education in England followed a different process, and did not begin to take shape until the 1870s. The introduction of centralised institutions often occurred in the colonies first, treating these territories as a social laboratory where policy initiatives were tried that would be less acceptable in England. The emergence of national education boards answerable to the colonial administrations, who were in turn answerable to London, resulted in the ability of the imperial state to influence what occurred within and beyond the classroom. The relative success of this strategy therefore depended on the interaction and shaping of local agents such as local administration, school managers, clergymen, teachers and parents.

Imperial state power was thus practised through the organisation and strategies of different social actors via the technology of social institutions. The nature and agency of these local networks resulted in a specific network of relations between these actors, and the constellation of these that determined the overall balance of forces in a specific colony. This also illustrates how discourse regarding state-run education in the Empire was made and remade, rather than simply transferred, through this connection between Britain and the colonies. This process has been explored in the context of white settler colonies such as Ireland, Canada and Australia introducing similar systems. This article examines how the general strategy shaping these locations compares with that of Trinidad. Some excellent work has been conducted in the examination of different education systems that emerged in India and South Africa, which would complement future work on Trinidad.

**Trinidad and early state involvement**

Nineteenth-century Trinidad had a complex social structure. Prior to becoming a British colony in 1797, the island was under Spanish control and had a significant number of French settlers. The abolition of slavery in 1834 granted rights to a vast proportion of Trinidad’s population and fundamentally changed the social structure into a three-tier class pyramid with freed slaves and Indian indentured labourers at the bottom, white colonial elites at the top and the peoples of mixed ancestry in between. Trinidadian society therefore comprised a multitude of social actors with differing identities, language, religion, cultural practices and desires. Tensions resulted from this, which became a target for management by the colonial government. As far as British reformers were
concerned, the previously enslaved populations in the colonies and the poor populations at home and across the Empire ‘occupied similar moral spaces and had to be treated in similar, if never identical ways’. This indicates how strategies of reforming governance in Trinidad would be informed by reforms from the imperial centre as well as others throughout the Empire. A Legislative Council was formed in 1832 to govern issues on the island, but this was not an elected council and comprised officials chosen by the governor. This colonial administrative structure would not change for almost a century, meaning that the governor would have significant influence over legislation on the island. The strategies, reforms and influence emanating from the Colonial Office would therefore be filtered through the governor and his selected assembly throughout this time. The early years of the council focused on the labour shortage post-emancipation, but soon turned its attention to other matters such as institutional reform. Social institutions soon became a tool to manage a varied colonial population in which education of the poor played a central role.

In the early nineteenth century, children of colonial elites were educated through private tutors, estate schools and a small number of private secondary schools while education of the poor was conducted by the various Christian missionaries. Planters did not prioritise the education of slaves; ‘the clergy or the missionaries who were prompt to undertake the education of the slave were looked upon with an unfriendly eye.’ Despite this, education became an important element in the race between various missionaries to gain converts and increase influence and social power in Trinidad. The missionaries were supported by the imperial administration with the Negro Education Grant in 1835 providing £30,000 across the region, which was aimed at ‘backing up the zeal of clergy and missionaries’. The British administration initially provided this grant based on applications and did not place conditions on its use. The influence of the imperial centre gradually increased as they attempted to use the grant to reduce religious tensions. Lady Mico’s Charity, a non-denominational education provider in the Caribbean, soon became the focus and received the largest proportion of the grant. Education thus became an important element in the shifting rationale of the Colonial authorities in the region. It was epitomised by Lord Stanley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, who stated that the British parliament ‘must endeavour to give [the freed slaves in the Caribbean] habits, and to imbue them with feelings calculated to qualify them for the adequate discharges of their duties.’

The grant gave the British administration a mechanism to influence and monitor wider social change within the region. Charles LaTrobe was sent to the Caribbean in 1839

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16Lester, Imperial Networks, 29.
17House of Commons, ‘Report on Negro Education in British Guiana and Trinidad’, Sessional Papers, 1839, vol. 34, par. 34.455, paper 35.
18Missionaries and charities included Lady Mico’s Charity, the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, the London Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society.
19Colonial Office, ‘Correspondence: The Decision of the British Parliament to Make Funds Available for “Negro Education”’ (CO 318/131, National Archives, UK).
20House of Commons, ‘Instructions to Inspector Appointed to Visit Schools in W. Indies Which Received Parliamentary Grants of 1835 and 1836 for Negro Education’, Sessional Papers, 1837, vol. 43, par. 43.311, paper 393.
21House of Commons, ‘Ministerial Proposition For the Emancipation of Slaves’, Debate 1833, May 14, vol. 17, columns 1193–1262: 1228.
to inspect schools aided by the grant. The report documented the extension of education beyond the freed slaves, as the

[freed slave] alone is not to be benefited by the change, for in many instances public attention in the colonies is seen to be strongly directed to the re-organisation of existing institutions for education, and to the foundation of others suited to the wants of all classes of the population.

The lack of regulation in the application of the grant was highlighted, leading to the strengthening of the position of the British administration. The adoption of a uniform system of centrally regulated education throughout the region was recommended. The uniform system viewed a way to unite the objectives of the various Churches and to remove the stigma of a child attending a school run by a different faith. La Trobe evidenced this ideal when he stated: ‘if individuals attached to different communions are spared the shame of betraying open jealousy or of opposing each other, where they ought to cooperate; they only work well and peacefully side-by-side’.

Education was now an established target for both the British and colonial government; however, this increased involvement was seen with suspicion, especially regarding inspection from government agents. Increased tensions and debates regarding the state’s role in education resulted in inactivity and gradual reduction in the grant from 1841 and eventual cessation in 1845.

This experience mirrors others in the Empire where grants were supplied to missionaries and educational charities, often with little or no condition, such as the funding of missionaries in New South Wales or the Kildare Place Society in Ireland. This provided an avenue for a gradual increase in both central and colonial influence as the various grants became subject to government inquiries and reviews, and in each case the focus of the grant was shifted to combine communities of different religious tenets in the same classroom. It is interesting to note that these inquiries came from different places depending on the colony. In the white-settler colonies of Canada and Australia, these inquiries came from the new colonial administrative bodies, such as Egerton Ryerson’s review of the Canadian system, whereas in other colonies, such as Trinidad, these reviews were instigated by the Colonial Office. Whether local or central, these reviews all had a similar theme illustrating the wider shift in education as a social technology to reshape social networks and reduce tensions. This central and common strategy demonstrated how education was both a way to encourage cooperation between groups and a way in which these social groups could improve their situation.

These reviews led to further and more direct involvement from the colonial administration, initially with inspection and monitoring of the institutions receiving aid. These changes were often resisted or criticised as a perceived encroachment of the state on matters previously under the authority of the Churches. Education was an important element in the local networks of the various Churches, and resistance to changes can be

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22La Trobe would be appointed superintendent of Port Phillip District in New South Wales, and then would become the first lieutenant-governor of the new colony of Victoria in 1851.
23House of Commons, ‘Report on Negro Education’, 7.
24Ibid., 8.
25Frank J. Klingberg, ‘The Lady Mico Charity Schools in the British West Indies, 1835–1842’, Journal of Negro Education 24 (1939): 291; Shirley C. Gordon, ‘The Negro Education Grant 1835–1845: Its Application in Jamaica’, British Journal of Educational Studies 6 (1958): 140-50; House of Commons, ‘Colonial Clergy – West-Indian Magistrates’, Debates, April 24, 1843, vol. 68, cc865–73.
seen as a defence in maintaining their influence in local social networks. Other resistance from the Churches emerged from distrust of each other as some considered, as in Trinidad, that non-denominational education was a hidden form of proselytising. In the other colonies, this initial influence was followed by a period of legitimisation of colonial administration as an educational actor, with further inquiries and incremental reforms, as well as negotiations with the various existing education actors, which ended in the establishment of non-denominational and centralised systems. It is likely that Lord Stanley’s experience of establishing the system in Ireland informed and further strengthened this position on education in the various colonies directed from his position in the Colonial Office. The success of the Irish system in a predominantly Catholic country would inform how state education reforms could be established in other colonies with a large Catholic population, which was often suspicious of action from colonial authorities who were in the majority from the Church of England. However, while Trinidad seems to follow this general process, in practice the constellation and agency of local actors resulted in something uniquely different. While informed by and modelled on general policy occurring elsewhere, reforms in non-white settler colonies had to be formulated in response to the conditions that were found there.

**Lord Harris and the ward schools**

Lord George Harris arrived in Trinidad as Governor in 1846. Soon after his arrival he stated ‘that circumstances must and will modify that habits of all men’, in which he saw education of local freed populations as the method to invigorate local communities. In his eyes, education would instil the duties and habits to be performed in society and foster attachment to the local community, bolstering local networks and encouraging civic consciousness. Harris strengthened the colonial administration’s position and considered it the government’s responsibility to establish schools instead of charities and missions. Management should thus be placed in the hands of the local government officials, namely wardens. He supported non-denominational education with the intention of allowing the clergy greater support to instruct religious education separately. However, agricultural recession and immigration of Indian labour took both focus and financing away from educational reform. Throughout this time, the Colonial Office were putting pressure on the colonies in the Caribbean for educational reform. A despatch from Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1846 to 1852, to the governors in the region focused on the role of education in creating ‘new wants and desires’, indicating the use of education to shift behaviour and identity towards an imperial norm. He requested the British Privy Council on Education, led by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, to provide suggestions to the governors on the mode of organising schools. These suggestions outlined the objectives of education of the freed populations, which included encouraging habits of ‘self-control and moral discipline’.

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26 House of Commons, ‘Correspondence on Supply and Regulation of Labour, and General Condition of Trinidad’, *Sessional Papers 1847–48, Harris to Earl Grey*, November 28, 1846, vol. 44, par. 49.519, paper 62.
27 Campbell, *Young Colonial*, 7–8.
28 House of Commons, ‘Correspondence Relative to Supply of Labour to West Indies and Mauritius’, *Sessional Papers, 1847, Earl Grey to the Governors of the West Indian Colonies*, January 26, 1847, vol. 39, par. 39.115, paper 325.
29 Brief practical suggestions on the mode of organising and conducting day schools of industry, model farm schools and normal schools as part of a system of education for the ‘coloured’ [non-white] races of the British colonies, *Sessional Papers, 1847*, vol. 39, par. 39.115, paper 325, p. 7.
In Trinidad, this pressured Harris to develop a more concrete plan for education, which was passed by the Legislative Council in 1851. Schools were to be established throughout the wards, with the location determined by the warden and funded out of local rates, hence being known as ward schools. Harris instructed the Legislative Council that schools should be managed by local committees with the whole system subject to the surveillance and regulations of a Board of Education. Religion was to be taught separately as it was deemed that the government should not directly impart religious instruction, which should be the realm of the parent and clergyman. To do so, it was proposed that children attend their respective ministries for religious education for one and a half days per week. This exclusion of religious instruction from the classroom was one of the strongest points of opposition to the proposal. Harris responded directly to this criticism and stated that they needed ‘to give the best instruction possible to the whole population under the circumstances in which it was in place, and without entering upon that most important topic [of religion] on which there is so much difference of opinion.’ Importance was placed on creating a body of professional teachers trained by the administration, with a training and model school established in 1852. Harris had visited training establishments across the UK and modelled the new institution on that of the Irish training school. A request was sent to the Irish Board for a teacher to run the model school. Mr John Dixon was sent but died of a fever soon afterwards and was replaced by another Irish teacher. The Privy Council recommendations also included reform of the curriculum, with the focus to teach the ‘mutual interests of the Mother country and her dependencies.’ This centred on the Irish textbooks, which were deemed ideal for their non-specific and nondenominational content and their overt imperial focus. However, while this proposed plan followed closely what was occurring in other colonies in the Empire, a major difference soon emerged. While the creation of local committees was encouraged, clergymen were excluded from participation. This exclusion would mean that clergy-managed denominational schools would remain beyond the realm of state aid and influence. As integration of the clergy, and the population through their influence, into the functions of the state was the central principle in other systems such as those in Ireland, Canada and Australia, excluding the clergy would seem to lessen the potential impact of the system. This would remain a central issue in educational reform on the island for decades to come.

The ward schools established were directed towards the children of free families of colour and ex-slaves, as those of the white settlers were educated in the few private schools on the island or abroad. The overtly imperial curriculum in the early years of the system attempted to focus the identity of children of ex-slaves on their new position and role within the Empire, and away from any separate or exclusive habits representing a child’s heritage. In the Irish books, for example, any discussion of Africa was either negative or highlighted the need and potential for the imperial civilising mission to enlighten the native population. In the geography section of The Third Book of Lessons, produced by the Commissioners of National Education (Ireland), there is a discussion of how Africa is a ‘barren region of the earth, both in respect to the nature

30 Lord George Harris, ‘Message Delivered by his Excellency the Governor, at the Honourable Board of Legislative Council, of the 2nd April, 1851,’ enclosure D2, box 45, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
31 Board of Education: Report of the Committee of Education, Port of Spain Gazette, April 27, 1852, vol. 27, no. 34.
32 Ibid.
33 House of Lords, ‘Select Committee of House of Lords to Inquire into Practical Working of System of National Education in Ireland’, Sessional Papers, 1845, paper 525.
34 House of Commons, ‘Brief Practical Suggestions’, 7.
of the soil and the moral condition of its inhabitant’. 35 This is followed by the potential ‘discoveries’ in parts of Africa that would ‘present new scenes of and objects for commercial enterprise’ while also ‘open an unbound field for Christian philanthropy and missionary zeal’. 36 The expansive use of the textbooks throughout the Empire demonstrated an attempt at creating an imperial norm, where the British administration should be viewed in positive terms. This is furthered through the section on the Caribbean, where it is stated:

   The West Indian Islands are peopled by English and other European races, with a large number of negroes. These poor Africans were formerly brought over from Africa and sold as slaves, but have been set free by an order of the English Parliament. 37

In moving beyond the curriculum, the reforms in the education system did seem to encourage some social mobility within the population. Pupils from the model schools often went on to become planters, managers, estate overseers and many went on to secondary and university education. 38 The most common way the new education system encouraged social mobility was through the emergence of an important body of teachers throughout the island. Originally teachers were requested from elsewhere, but soon the pupil-teacher model established a mechanism of upwardsocial mobility for children of free ‘coloured’ families, and later children of ex-slaves and indentured labourers. Many pupil-teachers then became teachers in their own right, and soon became head teachers answerable to the school manager and inspectors of the system. This mobility, however, also demonstrated the new socio-political realities of the colony as teachers required a certificate from the Board of Education. Teachers therefore had to interact with the state-run model schools to achieve this mobility. Once in the training institutions, these actors would have been shaped by the curriculum and teachings of the state system, creating educational experts on behalf of the administration. The emergence of experts, such as professional teachers, was one of the techniques in which self-regulation was installed in the colonial populations who would ‘align their personal choices with the ends of government’ through their guidance within the classroom. 39 In this way, social mobility would be encouraged, but within the conditions of the colonial state, as individuals ‘would be free to pursue their own self-interest but not free to reject the cultural conditioning that defined what their self-interest should be. They would have opportunities for social mobility, but only after they learned their proper place.’ 40

The system soon started to encounter difficulties, especially around the establishment of management committees of ward schools. The exclusion of the clergy left the responsibility of management to the wardens and other members in the local community who did not show the same enthusiasm for education. Governor Harris left the colony in 1854, leaving behind a system of state-aided secular ward schools and independently funded denominational schools. In 1859 there were a total of 27 ward schools, along with

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35 Commissioners of National Education (Ireland), Third Book of Lessons for the Use in Schools, lr3708 c5 (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1836), 167.
36 ibid., 169.
37 Commissioners of National Education (Ireland), Fourth Book of Lessons for the Use in Schools, lr3708 c6 (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1847), 141.
38 Campbell, Young Colonials, 65–77.
39 Nikolas and Miller, ‘Political Power beyond the State’, 188.
40 Thomas Hold, The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labour, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938 (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 23.
both boys’ and girls’ model schools, which occurred alongside 27 denominational schools funded by the various Churches and missionaries. The succeeding governors did not pay close attention to the system, letting the Board of Education become inactive and leaving the sole inspector to operate the system.\textsuperscript{41} A decade later, the number of schools had increased by only three.\textsuperscript{42} The state system came under increased opposition, especially from the Catholic Church, which by 1869 had become ‘an enemy of the system’ and opened schools under its exclusive management where it could afford to.\textsuperscript{43}

The impact of centralised social institutions is dependent on the ability of various actors, state and non-state, to pursue particular interests through access to state capacities. Therefore, their effectiveness depends on the links to networks that exist beyond the state’s formal boundary.\textsuperscript{44} As seen elsewhere in the Empire, emerging centralised institutions, such as state education, were sites of negotiation and concession between the state and other social actors.\textsuperscript{45} To increase their role in education, the colonial authorities used their resources to influence reforms, but these reforms also had to connect with the interests of local actors to ensure their cooperation. Elsewhere local actors were given positions in the administration of the system and control in the management of schools, which offered a way for these actors to increase their influence in local networks. Ireland was again an exemplar for this, where Archbishops from different networks were key members of the Educational Board and local clergy were managers in the majority of schools. This allowed existing local actors to access state finance and resulted in a dramatic transfer of schools to the state system. Harris’s system lacked the ability to encourage local actors to do this, causing a lack of engagement, with the responsibility on the shoulders of local wardens who had to add this to their other duties. The exclusion of the clergy from education in Trinidad reduced the influence of the system on the population as it did not incorporate these powerful actors into its functions, and as such they could remain active opponents. The ongoing opposition from the Catholic community in Trinidad, of both British and French descent, led the then Secretary for the Colonies to request an inquiry into education in Trinidad. These commissions and inquiries were a particularly significant mechanism, which increased the role of the Colonial Office. The information collected mapped the social relations across the Empire while the dispatches and letters of communication became the medium in which reforms were encouraged from the centre. These inquiries were often sent to other colonies to demonstrate and inform reforms, thus illustrating the formal ways in which knowledge and strategies informed other parts of the Empire but flowed through the centre to do so.\textsuperscript{46} In the inquiry, the desire of the Catholic Church for state resources for education was clear as it pushed for the abolition of the present secular common schools and requested that they be substituted by denominational schools. This highlights that the various clergy and Churches were willing to engage with the colonial administration in an effort to receive assistance for education, but only in circumstances that matched their desire to provide religious education to the population. A similar

\textsuperscript{41}House of Commons, ‘Reports to Secretary of State on Past and Present State of H.M. Colonial Possessions, 1858 (Part 1. West Indies and Mauritius), Sessional papers, vol. 44, par. 44.1, paper 2711.

\textsuperscript{42}House of Commons, ‘Papers on the State of Education in Trinidad’, Sessional Papers, 1870, vol. 50, par. 50.655, paper 450.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{44}Bob Jessop, State Power (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 6.

\textsuperscript{45}Margaret S. Archer, Social Origins of Educational Systems (London: Sage, 1979), 67.

\textsuperscript{46}Lester, Imperial Networks, 6.
situation occurred in New South Wales due to the strength of opposition from the Anglican bishop, which resulted in two state-funded systems, a non-denominational and denominational system, which were eventually merged into one state system. This again emphasises that while educational reform was encouraged along the same lines throughout colonies in the Empire, systems were formulated in response to the specific conditions and agency of local networks that were found there.

**Keenan, reforms and local management**

Patrick Keenan, the Head Inspector of the Irish system and its future Chief Commissioner, arrived in Trinidad on 6 February 1869 to conduct the inquiry into education. The expanding influence of Irish education reforms in the Empire can be seen at this time. Lord Stanley, who introduced the Irish system, was Secretary of the Colonies in 1858 and again from 1882 to 1885. Richard Bourke was a supporter of the Irish system and had established a national school on his estate in Ireland. From 1831 to 1837 he became the Governor of New South Wales, where he attempted to introduce the Irish system. Irish inspectors, such as Keenan, and teachers were also requested in other colonies to establish and manage model schools and provide guidance to state-run systems. While often filtered through London, the importance of these formal networks and connections to Ireland along with newspapers reporting the relative success of the system in Ireland became an important facilitator of educational reform across the Empire.

Keenan visited 76 schools, including all ward and model schools, and was highly critical of the educational provisions both within and beyond the classroom. He commented on the poor condition and unsuitability of the schoolhouses and criticised the low standards of teaching. It was noted that the curriculum focused on the Irish books, and while their quality was recognised, Keenan lamented that there were no books that focused on the history or nature of Trinidad. This is interesting, as it has been shown how the Irish books had the ability to advance the colonial mission, but Keenan seems to illustrate some nuance by suggesting that while this remained the core it should also encourage unique place attachment to Trinidad. The adherence to the exclusive secular principles of the system came under fire, with a response to the prevailing fear that if religious instruction was allowed, secular instruction would be ‘frittered away’ completely.\(^{47}\) The success of the Irish system was provided as evidence to counter this argument, as it succeeded with a system that required a specific number of hours for secular instruction with religious instruction separated to ‘prevent the possibility of an undue trespass upon the secular business’.\(^{48}\)

His strongest criticisms were levelled outside the schoolroom. The inactivity of the Board of Education and its inability to carry out the previous plan was reported, and a new Board was recommended with 12 members split evenly across the different faiths. The inquiry cited the exclusive management of ward schools as the biggest fault of the system, stating that schools should be managed by those ‘having local relation or connection with the places in which the schools are situated’.\(^{49}\) Like the Irish system, it was recommended

\(^{47}\)House of Commons, ‘Papers on the State of Education in Trinidad’, 1870, 36.

\(^{48}\)Ibid., 36.

\(^{49}\)Ibid., 38.
that the applicant to the Board become the school manager, and it would be better if this was a clergyman. It went further and suggested management of all existing ward schools be bestowed on the clergyman of the same faith as the majority of children in that school. This clergyman manager would be answerable to the Board and, if he became negligent, should be remonstrated with in the first instance, and then denied funding if the problem continued. The core criticism of the inquiry was therefore precisely what differentiated the Trinidad system from the emerging model in the white-settler colonies of the Empire. The management structure of wardens did not have the same influence or responsibility within the local social networks as the clergy. The transfer of management to the clergy would therefore integrate these local networks more efficiently and encourage active managers through their own self-interest in gaining state finance. In doing so, these local actors would transfer, establish and manage schools under a state system as it offered a way for them to maintain their existing interests and influence within local networks with the assistance of state funding. Once connected, the Board had regulatory powers over these actors, and as such would encourage self-regulation and shape behaviour towards certain norms. To do so required a form of negotiation, as these actors would have their own interests to serve, along with the interests with the hierarchies they were connected to outside the state structure. The reforms proposed therefore required both the interests of the colonial administration in expanding the state school system, and other non-state institutions in providing state resources to assist schools in which religious education could be provided by the clergy, to be served. Other suggestions were offered, such as payment by results, a West Indian university and improved education for Indian indentured labour. The reaction to the report was favourable, with agreement between the Secretary of the Colonies Earl Granville and Governor Arthur Hamilton-Gordon on the key elements, especially that of local clergy management. The Governor quickly designed a new scheme with the aim ‘to improve the condition of the schools by the creation of a local interest in their efficiency’.\textsuperscript{50} In his letter to the Legislative Council, he stated that the integration of local actors into management was ‘absolutely essential to the success of a school’, that a significant amount of this work would fall to the clergy and that ‘it is better that is should do so, under the control and supervision of the Government’.\textsuperscript{51} It was also stated that it would be impossible to create this interest for the local clergy unless permission were granted to teach religion in schools, thus providing benefits to the Churches beyond mere access to state resources.

There was substantial public interest in these reforms, which were extensively reported in the local media. Education had been ‘the all-absorbing topic’ that had ‘been fully discussed and ventilated’ and had ‘elicited public opinion in an unmistakable manner’.\textsuperscript{52} The reporting and opinion on education also demonstrated that the shift to state responsibility and the rationale of education beyond learning was evident in public discourse as ‘the State is bound to see that each child is instructed and trained to such an extent as will qualify [the Trinidad population] to become a moral and intellectual population . . . and honourable and usefully discharge duties as a citizen’.\textsuperscript{53} The proposal

\textsuperscript{50}House of Commons, ‘Governor the Hon. A. H. Gordon to the Earl Granville, K.G, 24 Nov. 1869’, in House of Commons, ‘Papers on the State of Education in Trinidad’, 1870.

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52}Saturday, \textit{Port of Spain Gazette}, October 15, 1870, vol. 1 no. 6, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
to incorporate denominational schools within the government system was positively received:

each clergyman would be patron and manager of his own school, with proper oversight which would be exercised by a government inspector . . . there would be a guarantee that the secular education imparted was of the right kind and such as the state could, with propriety, support.54

Throughout the various reporting exercises, the Irish system was showcased as a system in which both secular and religious education existed in each school.55

However, the implementation of the new system soon departed from the recommendations. New discussions on the island suggested that the Board maintain management if no clear religious majority was present in a school. This provided the basis for a significant divergence between Keenan’s recommendations and the scheme that was introduced, as while the new system focused on local management it split this into two forms. The new ‘dual’ system established ‘government schools’ fully funded by the state and managed by the new Board, and ‘assisted schools’ managed by the relevant clergymen and partially funded by the state.56 The partial nature of aid to the denominational schools meant that they had to charge a fee while government schools could remain free. The separate management structure and funding went contrary to the inquiry and gave government schools the advantage. As a result, denominational schools were slow to transfer to the new system or to establish new assisted schools. By 1876 there were a total of 67 schools supported by the colonial administration: two model schools, 44 government schools, and 21 assisted schools. These assisted schools were split across the different religions, with 12 managed by clergymen of the Church of England and seven by the Catholic Church.57 Given that the recommendations focused on the full integration of the clergy into the management structure of state education on the island, the new system only partially employed this ideal with a clear differentiation between direct state actors and non-state actors. In providing an advantage to government schools and treating denominational schools separately, the administration was not providing an attractive enough benefit to the clergy to transfer their schools.

This issue was identified, and the dual system was modified in 1875 as it was felt that the scheme was too rigid and did not encourage the establishment of denominational schools. The shift away from exclusive government control and secular curricula continued as clergy-managed state-regulated schools were seen as a way to bring a colony of ‘mixed nationalities and diverse religion’ closer together as the ‘antagonistic feelings arising from difference of creed, are by common consent of the managers sunk and forgotten’.58 Assisted schools and government schools were both required to charge fees and have a payment-by-results system of aid, funded

54Ibid.
55The question of unsectarian education, The New Era, February 7, 1870, vol. 1, no. 15, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
56This aid was one-third of the cost of establishing and maintaining a school and paying the teacher.
57Legislative Council (Trinidad), ‘Legislative Council Papers for 1877, Paper 4: Abstract of the Returns of the Schools Supported or Aided by the Government for the Quarter Ended on the 31st December 1876’, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
58Saturday, Port of Spain Gazette, December 19, 1881 vol. 6, no. 304, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
through special education rates and not dependent on ward rates. The requirement for teachers at assisted schools to have a government licence was dropped to encourage their transfer to the system. Governor Henry Turner Irving saw these reforms as expanding and improving education in a cheaper manner by increasing competition and efficiency of schools. These modifications resulted in a race between government and assisted schools between 1875 and 1890, as well as a race between assisted schools of different faiths. Assisted schools increased from 21 in 1876 to 45 in 1887, closely competing with the 57 government schools. There were further modifications to the system throughout this period, including the requirement that all schools were conducted in English, as ‘it is desirable that we should be able to use the language in which . . . learning of the Empire [is] recorded and embodied’.59 While increasing the number of assisted schools, it was soon noted that there was a difficulty in finding local managers for government schools and that it fell directly to the government to act as the ‘educational pioneer’.60 Throughout this period there was still a high level of responsibility given to the inspector of the system, who was repeatedly critical of certain aspects of the system. He stated that the main argument in favour of the dual system was that assisted schools would eventually take the place of government schools, but this was yet to happen. The annual inspectors’ reports were included in the Council Papers and sent to the Colonial Office, with the criticisms received by the Secretary for the Colonies who called for yet another inquiry into the educational system.

**Lumb, imperial pressure and equal footing**

The Lumb Committee on Education conducted its inquiry in 1889. The Committee stated that Keenan’s suggestions were ignored in practice in the 1870 and 1875 reforms and the establishment of assisted schools had been ‘thwarted rather than encouraged by the education department’.61 Blame was again placed on the Board of Education, which had failed to control and exercise supervision over the system or to create the conditions that suited local clergy and other actors to connect to the system. It suggested encouraging assisted schools by putting them once and for all on an equal footing with the government school. The report concluded that control of the system should be ‘exercised by the state over the schools . . . directed in encouraging managers to afford a simple and sound system of education’ in which the state should be ‘advising managers and teachers, requiring the rules to be observed’.62 Baron Knutsford, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, used the report as the basis for questioning the education system and invited Patrick Keenan to comment. Local management of government schools became the target for disapproval, where the Secretary criticised the failure of the various reforms ‘to make explicit provisions for the institution of local managers of the government

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59 Legislative Council (Trinidad), ‘Legislative Council Papers for 1881, Paper 94: Rules for Assisted Schools made by the Board of Education, 15th November 1881’, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.

60 Ibid.

61 Committee on Education, ‘Report of the Committee on Education for 1889’, enclosure D2, box 50, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.

62 Ibid.
schools’.

Keenan’s comments echoed this by critiquing the exclusive treatment of

government schools, stating that this contradicted his 1869 recommendations.

The Secretary pushed for the reforms suggested by the Lumb Committee, especially

those that reflected Keenan’s original plan, and encouraged the establishment of

local management with tighter surveillance and control over assisted schools. The

pressure resulted in the educational ordinance of 1890. A new Board was con-
stituted with more powers to ‘regulate and direct the local management of all

elementary schools’. Two local managers were required for each government

school, who were to meet regularly and inspect the schools, and who were subject
to the control of the Board. Management of assisted schools was also to be vested in
two local managers. The requirement for teacher certificates was reintroduced. The

funding of schools was shifted to put the two systems on an equal footing, with

increased government contributions to salaries, fees and teacher accommodation in

assisted schools. An important regulation was included, which stated a government

school would be discontinued if there were an adequate number of assisted schools

in an area. These reforms finally brought the system more in line with its counter-

parts in the Empire, with state capacities offered to local actors to fulfil the functions

of the state. Even in the previously exclusive state-run government schools, local

actors were now integrated within the management structure. With more emphasis

on local management the balance of school numbers shifted with an increase in

assisted schools; by 1896 there were 129 assisted schools and 60 government

schools.

There were to be few reforms of this system until the twentieth century. In 1896, the

Legislative Council asked the Church hierarchies about potential reforms to assisted

schools. It was asked whether management should be extended to large denominational

boards, and if so, whether these should be accountable to the government or the heads

of the respective denominations. While this would seemingly lessen the influence of

the colonial administration, it reflects what had occurred elsewhere where more power was

ceded to ‘non-state’ actors to further integrate their powers into the state system without

destroying the autonomy of these actors. In Trinidad, however, the extension of powers

to the denominational boards was opposed for fear of how that power would be used.

This is reflected in the statement of John Morton, the Presbyterian manager of the school

for Indian children, as it would ‘create new evils, such as internal dissension about the

distribution of funds, dissatisfaction on the part of managers, and fiction and discontent

with the control exercised by the board’. The various denominational leaders feared

63Colonial Office, 'Secretary of State to Sir William Robinson, 27 November 1889, Despatch no. 290', Primary Education: Despatches and Papers Relating Thereto, enclosure D2, box 35, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
64Colonial Office, 'Sir Patrick Keenan to Colonial Office, 14 September 1889', Primary Education: Despatches and Papers Relating Thereto, enclosure D2, box 35, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
65Legislative Council (Trinidad), 'Education Ordinance, 1890: Despatches in Reference Thereto', enclosure D2, box 35, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
66Legislative Council (Trinidad), 'An Ordinance to Repeal the Laws Relating to Primary Education in the Colony and to Make Other Provisions in Lieu Thereon', Council paper no. 17, July 14, 1890, enclosure D2, box 43, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
67Legislative Council (Trinidad), 'Report Relative to the Board of Education, by R. Gervase Bush, Inspector of Schools, 11 March 1898', enclosure D2, box 50, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
68Legislative Council (Trinidad) 'The Clerk of the Legislative Council to Heads of Denominations, Nov. 1896', enclosure D2, box 35, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.
69Ibid.
that control given to the Churches would put teachers and local management in a difficult position, and also worried about the actions of the opposing Churches in the management of schools. This illustrates the complete shift in the educational network from the early nineteenth century, when state influence was seen with suspicion. By the twentieth century all actors now understood the new social realities of the colonial state, as the various social actors realised that the balance of powers in Trinidad was now regulated through state institutions and managed by local non-state actors, and that shifting this to a greater extent towards the Church hierarchies would unsettle this.

At the end of the nineteenth century the various reforms in Trinidad had shifted education from an exclusively state-managed system and separate denominational system to a state-regulated but locally managed system for all. The system now combined the interests of the colonial administration in regulating education with the incentive of state resources for local actors without diminishing their influence. While this occurred earlier in other colonies, the unsettled nature of Caribbean society post-emancipation resulted in a longer process of shifting the governance structure towards an imperial norm. While others see this as the state loosening its grip, it represents the gradual shift in governance that extended its influence over local 'non-state' actors, which came under the regulatory and surveillance powers of the central state. 70 This allowed the state to 'colonise' other spaces of power previously outside its domain. The fluid nature of the state is highlighted in this process as other actors are drawn into its interventions and increasingly become part of its strategic operations, even while retaining a field of independent actions and furthering their own interest.

However, in understanding the reforming of the system to include local clergy and other actors as essential to the management of schools, an unfortunate and all too predictable colonial narrative emerges. The whole education system was established and directed towards the non-white population after emancipation, but by the end of the nineteenth century every role in the higher levels of administration was still held by white men. School managers were either white clergymen in assisted schools or wardens and urban councillors in the government schools. Inspectors and board members were all white men, designing regulations, inspecting conduct and directing curriculum towards the Trinidad population. One noteworthy exception was the talented schoolmaster and author J. J. Thomas, who became a secretary within the Board of Education. While education did provide some form of social mobility, with the wealthier of the non-white communities able to transition their children from elementary education to the few secondary schools on the island and abroad, this was not the general experience. The slow inclusion of non-whites in the lower levels of education administration, which was echoed across all government departments, highlighted an internal contradiction, namely that the encouragement of education as a mechanism for social mobility was not taken up by the administration of that very institution. This was slow to change in the early twentieth century as successful head teachers were promoted to be assistant inspectors, such as Sydney Smith in 1923, who was succeeded by Nelson Comma. 71

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70 Ogborn, ‘Local Power and State Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Britain’.  
71 Campbell, Young Colonials, 265.
Conclusion

The case of education reform illustrates how institutions were central in the shifting nature of colonial governance throughout the nineteenth-century British Empire. Governance of the colonies included developing strategies that encouraged self-governance and regulation, where institutions were used as tools to shape an individual’s knowledge about oneself and one’s behaviour towards an idealised norm. The emergence of state-regulated policing and prisons attempted to shape and establish the limits of social behaviour, while centralised healthcare and welfare served as a new biopolitics of regulatory functions that was directed at regenerating and managing populations throughout the Empire. Education combined these aims within the same institution. New centralised Boards of Education dictated what occurred within a classroom, including the shape of the classroom itself. Emerging first in Ireland, Central Boards emerged across the Empire and created classrooms that were ‘an assemblage of pedagogic knowledge, moralising aspirations, buildings of a certain design, classrooms organised to produce certain types of visibility’, with techniques to organise bodies in space and time that ‘assembled and infused with the aim of the government of capacities and habits’. A standardised curriculum based on the Irish textbooks, pedagogic practices through teacher training and common examinations all worked to refocus the identity of children away from anything that was unique to their country of origin and towards an imperial norm.

It was how these institutions shifted colonial governance beyond the classroom that demonstrated the shifting nature, and spatial differences, of the imperial state. While previously under the control of local actors, the centralisation of these institutions incorporated local networks of power under the regulatory and surveillance powers of the colonial state. This intensification of administrative power occurred through the contested formation of these institutions. Reforms integrated non-state actors into the functions of the state by integrating them into the management of state-run institutions through their own interests by accessing state resources. Colonial governance was thus focused on co-opting non-state actors into its functioning, illustrating that the state had a fluid boundary that incorporated existing social networks into its strategic operations, while those actors also maintained their field of independent actions. Education was a prime example of this, where existing networks from the various Churches and Church-led charities were incorporated into the management of education, with the state encouraging cooperation between these actors and regulating their conduct through the agency of inspectorates. A model for this reform spread across the Empire, where restructuring of colonial administrations themselves was followed by reforms that shaped relations such that they were ‘progressively elaborated, rationalised and centralised in the form of, or under the auspices, of state institutions’. This became the

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72 J. D. Marshall, ‘Foucault and Educational Research’, in Foucault and Education: Disciplines and knowledge, ed. Stephen J. Ball (New York: Routledge, 1990), 15.
73 Nikolas Rose, Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 53.
74 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power’, Critical Inquiry 8 (1982): 793.
strategy in many colonies, first tested out in Ireland and then transmitted through copied regulations, inquiries and recommendations from the Colonial Office, as well as through the movement of officials and teachers. The influence of state-run schools therefore extended beyond their walls, developing a whole set of lateral controls, and represented minute ‘social observatories’ that applied to adults and exercised supervision over them and, ultimately, society.\textsuperscript{76} In this way, the state-regulated school can thus be classed as a ‘little outpost of Empire’.\textsuperscript{77}

While this occurred in a similar manner across white-settler colonies, the case of Trinidad illustrates how these wider strategies had to be adopted and tailored to the specific situation and social networks of a given colony. Suggestions from London were either ignored or seen as impractical in the diverse post-emancipation society in Trinidad. Within schools there was a mirrored image of the rest of the Empire, with an imperial curriculum through the English language. Outside the school walls, however, the shift in education as a social technology took a different route. The dual system established by Governor Harris meant there was direct government control of education, with less influence and incorporation of local actors within education. Continued pressure from the imperial centre combined with some inefficiencies within the system eventually resulted in the shift towards an education system that resembled others within the Empire, incorporating the local clergy into the strategic operations of the state. In Trinidad, this also had the effect of demonstrating the possibility of some social mobility through an advancing teacher role, but also the new social reality of interacting with the colonial administration to achieve this. In examining the difference in educational reforms in Trinidad, this article illustrates how the state is an assemblage of power centres that offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside the state to act for different political purposes.\textsuperscript{78} The imperial state had become an ensemble of institutions and practices, which, through various agents, organised and restructured social networks in a standardised way in order to make the political and economic situation of imperialism work.

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**Notes on contributor**

Kevin Lougheed is currently a Lecture in Human Geography in the Department of Geography in King’s College London, where he has been since 2016. Prior to that he was a Teaching and Research Fellow in the Department of Geography in Trinity College Dublin where he had also completed his PhD. Kevin’s research interests focus on the emergence of state institutions as technologies of government throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He has published several papers on the emergence of national education in the British Empire. He also has an interest in critical heritage studies and symbolic and monumental landscapes.

\textsuperscript{76}Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991), 211.

\textsuperscript{77}Patrick F. O’Donovan, *Stanley’s Letter: The National School System and Inspectors in Ireland, 1833–1922* (Galway: Galway Education Centre, 2017).

\textsuperscript{78}Jessop, *State Power*, 37.
Kevin was also a research associate to the European Research Council (ERC) funded project ‘NorFish – North Atlantic Fisheries: An Environmental History, 1400–1700’, based at the School of Histories and Humanities in Trinity College Dublin. The project studied the environmental history of the North Atlantic, focusing on the impact of the fish revolution 1400–1700. Kevin’s work on this project focused on critical cartography and the mapping of the Grand Banks fisheries to understand changes over time.

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