CHAPTER 1

Variations on the Prefectural Figure in Europe: Some Research Questions and an Ideal-Type for a Comparison

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Comparing is brought out of singularity and helps to abandon the religion of uniqueness. […]. There is no good social science riveted to one point in time and space. There is nothing but periods and experiences which telescope each other, contexts which intertwine, categories under construction, institutions in rivalry, individuals shaped by collectives. Instead of the unique, there are series, generations, movements, interactions, figures and exceptions. (Jablonka 2017: 170–171)

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1.1 Starting with Giovanni Sartori’s Three Questions

In a theoretical article that is now a classic, Giovanni Sartori identified the three key questions of any comparative approach in social sciences. Firstly, the comparatist must wonder about the reasons for choosing the comparative method—‘Why compare’? Then, the comparatist shall reflect upon the degree of comparability between the objects—‘What is comparable’? In addition, the various methods and tricks to build up the comparison must be elaborated—‘How to compare’? (Sartori 1991: 243–257). The state-of-the-art scholarly literature in comparative politics and comparative public administration has mainly addressed the third question—the comparison strategies,—in particular the tools and techniques that help researchers to build comparisons (see Peters 1990, 1998; Pierre 2005; Hassenteufel 2005; Dreyfus and Eymeri-Douzans 2006; Courtin et al. 2012). Without denying the importance of the epistemic issues related to the third question, we would like to start here by addressing the first two, which came to our mind from the very start of the collective endeavour that finds a first milestone achievement with the publication of the present edited volume.¹

The first ambition of our research programme was to question the presupposed singularity of the prefect ‘à la française’. To say it funnily, prefects would be ‘so Frenchy’! This stereotype seems to be widely shared, in France and elsewhere, among academics as well as in the

¹As exposed in full detail elsewhere (Eymeri-Douzans and Piana 2019), it was on the occasion of the 32nd Annual Conference of the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA), held in Toulouse, 2010, especially at the Host Country Special Panel on ‘France and its Public Administrations. A State of the Art’, later published under the same title (Eymeri-Douzans and Bouckaert 2013) that it was first envisaged with Geert Bouckaert, the then-President of the EGPA, the creation of EGPA’s seventieth Permanent Study Group, ‘Sociology of the State: Reforms & Resilience’. This group was set up by the new EGPA President Wim van de Donk, on the occasion of an international conference, at Sciences Po Toulouse, in November 2011, where we started to work on the ‘Figures du Préfet en Europe’. That was the kick-off of a multiannual comparative project (with no funding!) humorously baptised ‘Look at the s(S)tate of Prefects! Etudier les Préfets dans tous leurs é(E)tats’. Co-animated by Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans and Gildas Tanguy, the project slowly developed and matured in PSG 17 successive panels at the Bucharest (2011), Bergen (2012), Edinburgh (2013), Speyer (2014), and again Toulouse (2015) EGPA conferences. We want to address our very special thanks to Geert Bouckaert, Wim van de Donk, Edoardo Ongaro, Fabienne Maron and Aurélien Buffat for constant and friendly support.
cultivated public. The prefectoral institution is considered by many as intrinsically associated with the political and administrative history of France. It is undeniable that the modern prefect was created in early 1800, by the *Loi du 28 pluviôse an VIII concernant la division du territoire français et l’administration*, promulgated by First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte... and has survived all sorts of vicissitudes for 220 years. This contemporary territorial representative of the central State is thus depicted as a distant heir of the King’s seneschals and bailiffs of the Middle Ages, then of the intendants of the Bourbons in the times of Absolutism: prefects are always said to be part of a long tradition of politico-administrative centralisation (de Tocqueville 2004 [1856]). In this perspective, the prefectoral institution is treated as a French administrative oddity, related to a specific national trajectory of ‘stateness’ (as coined by Linz and Stepan 1996: Chapter 2—‘Stateness’, Nationalism, and democratisation: 16–37). Several foreign scholars who worked on French prefects have also exaggerated this French ‘exceptionalism’ (e.g. Chapman 1955; Fesler 1962; Spitzer 1965; Richardson 1966; Armstrong 1973; Withcomb 1974; Machin 1977; Antonielli 1983; Cassese 1983; Daly 2001), with the notable exception of Alistair Cole (Cole and John 2001; Cole 2010, 2017). Furthermore, the comparative studies which have flourished more recently in many disciplines of our social sciences about public institutions, public administrations or administrative elites (without being exhaustive, cf. Page and Wright 1999; Chandler 2000, 2001; Dreyfus 2000; Chatriot and Gosewinckel 2006; Dreyfus and Eymeri-Douzans 2006; Kuzmics and Axtmann 2007; Becker and Von Krosigk 2008; Peters 2008; Baldersheim and Rose 2010; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2014) have paid little or no attention to prefects, considered as pertaining to a peculiar national tradition.

Yet, a European inventory of the various existing ways of organising territorial governance and centre-periphery relations in various countries obliges to seriously nuance the myth of a French exceptionality as regards prefects. As a matter of fact, officials in charge of representing the central State in the provinces and taking a role of politico-administrative territorial leadership can be found in most countries of the European
continent... and elsewhere in the world. Of course, their names vary a lot. In countries with a Napoleonic administrative tradition (in the categories of Peters 2008 or Ongaro 2010), the word ‘préfet’ has simply been translated: this is the case in Italy, in Romania, in Greece, in Turkey. In the Netherlands, the title of ‘Commissaris van de Koning’, commissioner of the King, is very close in meaning, considering the monarchical nature of the regime, with the one of ‘commissaire de la République’ that happened to be a substitute to the title of prefect at several moments in French history (1848, 1944–1945, 1982–988). In other Latin countries, one can find the equivalent word to Governor, such as in Spain—‘Gobernador civil’ or ‘Gobernador de provincia’ then ‘Delegado del Gobierno’ or previously in Portugal—‘Gobernador civil’, now abolished, or in Belgium—‘Gouverneur de province’. In Scandinavian countries, we also find provincial or county governors, holding different titles whose etymology is vernacular: ‘Landshövding’ in Sweden; Fylkesmann in Norway; and ‘(Stats)amtmand’ in Denmark (abolished since 2007). As for Germany, at the lower level of the inside territory of the Länder, we can find the ‘Regierungspräsident’ as well as the ‘Landeshauptmann’—the latter also in neighbouring Austria. As for the Central and Eastern parts of Europe, there are also governors who bear that title in many countries, especially the ‘Губернатор’ (phonetically, ‘guvernator’) who head each and every ‘oblast’ (province) in Russia or Bulgaria. Furthermore, we will not forget Poland, with its ‘voivodeships’, each headed by a ‘voivode’ (wojewód). Usually appointed by the central government, sometimes elected as in Switzerland, these officials placed on top of the (web of) institutions in charge of governing and administering the politico-administrative subdivisions of the territory, and thus the society and economy of our States, turn out to be much more of a common figure than of a French peculiarity.

The first question of Giovanni Sartori is thus answered: Why compare prefects in Europe? Because there is something to compare, and because such comparison has not been started yet in the scholarly literature.

Unsurprisingly, there are prefects in almost all African countries which are former French colonies, sometimes bearing other names such as the ‘Wali’ in Morocco (Hachimi-Alaoui 2019) and Algeria. Farther away, one can find the institution of the ‘Todōfuken’ in Japan (see Park 1978), or the one of the ‘Jefe Político’ in Mexico (see Brondino 2010; Falcón 2015), and other comparable ones in some Latin American countries.
1.2 From Sartori’s Second Question to a Weberian Ideal-Type: Portraying the Prefectoral Figure

Comparison is a delicate art consisting of a balanced attention given to comprehend and explain ‘regularities’ as well as ‘singularities’ between the cases that are investigated (to borrow from Simmel 1991). It is undeniable that the histories of State-building in Europe are very different from one country to another, that the institutional architectures and the administrative traditions (Painter and Peters 2010) are different, as well as the sociopolitical contexts. All these parameters have shaped and are still impacting the ways and means of naming these territorial representatives of the State, defining their status, conceiving their role, stating in legislations and regulations their detailed duties and competencies, and limiting and controlling their power. In addition, the size and the nature of the territories subject to the jurisdiction of these prefects, governors or commissioners also varies significantly. However, we can imagine to elaborate—and later on refine—a frame for a ‘constructive comparatism’, as the great historian Marcel Detienne inspired scholars to do, so as to ‘go beyond the common-sense categories [and] build comparable objects which are never given as immediate data’ (Detienne 2000: 11)—this being the path to avoid ‘comparing the incomparable’ and to really compare what is comparable.

The second question highlighted by Giovanni Sartori calls for us to create the conditions of a scientifically valid comparison. Our EGPA study group wanted to avoid the pitfall of a pure observation of the irreducibility between the national cases, as well as the pitfall of ‘spontaneous comparability’ (Hassenteufel 2005: 118). Our small group, discussing again and again from conference to conference, has gone through a construction-reconstruction process and has tried to work out a common working definition—which necessarily involves operations to reduce the complexity of reality (Giraud 2004)—of the prefectoral figure, without falling into the trap of ‘conceptual stretching’ against which Giovanni Sartori warns us. In that regard, comparative work necessitates to classify the various forms of ‘institutional isomorphism’ (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 147–160) that may allow to elaborate a generic definition of the institution under scrutiny and to pinpoint areas for comparisons.
What is a ‘prefect’, then? Better said and more precisely, what are the essential dimensions or components whose combination allows us—researchers—to recognise in a given case—e.g. a Spanish ‘delegado del Gobierno’ in a given Castillan province, or the governor of the Bulgarian oblast of Vratsa whom one of the co-authors once met,—if not an exemplary of the same ‘model’ or ‘pattern’—no one is that structuralist anymore!—at least, a situated, localised, contextualised and thus individualised variant or variation (like in music) of what we can try to elaborate as a Weberian ‘ideal-type’, that is to say a ‘one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view [and aspects] according to which concrete individual phenomena […] are arranged into a unified analytical construct (Gedankenbild)’ (Weber 1963: 90). This ideal-type of the prefectoral institution in Europe, this ‘homogeneous logical fiction’ (or ‘einheitlich’), is what we propose here to qualify as the prefectural figure—with plain consciousness of the rich polysemy of the word and notion(s) of ‘figure’ in English as well as in French language.

Considered from a European comparative perspective, and after six years of reflections and valuable discussions with our co-authors and the other participants to our EGPA panels, what are the essential constitutive components of the prefectural figure in Europe? In our view, the prefectural figure in Europe can be portrayed—in a stylised way once again—as follows:

(a) It is a public office (the prefectural office) whose holder is a well-identified person (the prefect) often (but not in all countries) backed up by a dedicated bureaucracy (the prefecture) placed under his/her command.

(b) It is a figure inherited from the past and shaped by historicity—even when recently re-established—that is entrusted with a symbolic mission—more or less solemn depending on the country—to represent, to embody and to personify the State, the Crown or the Republic in the provinces and territories more or less distant from the political centre, whatever centre it might be (federal, national, federated).

(c) The prefectural mission of representing the State, its continuity and its rationale is not only symbolic but also practical and often involves a role in the protection and promotion of the État de droit/Rechstaat/rule of law by means of a legal control exerted over the acts issued by local/provincial/regional governments, as well as an eminent responsibility for the maintenance of law-and-order.
and for crisis management, in relation with the police and armed forces.

(d) *The prefectoral figure is in charge of coordinating public policy implementation on the ground and, especially in these countries where there are specialised State administrations on the ground, to coordinate and control their activity.*

(e) *The prefectoral figure is always twofold: its officeholders are, at the same time, chief public administrators concerned with rules and procedures, and ‘political animals’ appointed by and responsible to the central government in place, even though officially prescribed to behave in a non-partisan way.*

(f) *The prefectoral figure is often an intermediator between the central government with its complex administrative apparatus and the territorial authorities or elites, acting as a sort of inland ambassador who circulates in both directions, from the capital to the territory and back dealing with issues, problems and demands.*

(g) *Finally, the prefectoral figure often—not always—exerts a form of territorial inclusive leadership as an ‘ensemblier’, a gatherer and facilitator who enjoys a nodality in the multi-actor networks and power games of nowadays territorial governance that allows him/her to bring together the influential elites, pertinent stakeholders and socio-economic forces of a given territory so as to foster joined-up initiatives and solutions in all domains of common interest.*

This first, modest and certainly perfectible outline of an ideal-type of the prefectoral figure in Europe nowadays is a conceptual attempt which acknowledges at the same time the commonalities and diversities between the actual figures of prefects, commissioners or governors observable in different countries with different national trajectories of statehood and State-building/making (see the classics: Anderson 1978; Evans et al. 1985; Mann 1984; Tilly 1985; Hobsbawm 1990). Among the countries with a prefectoral figure, we find small (Switzer cantons), medium size (Italy, Turkey) or huge States (the Federation of Russia); we find unitary States with little decentralisation so far (Romania and Bulgaria) or with a high degree of decentralisation (France, Sweden); we find formerly centralised States which have gone as far as a regionalised model (Spain) or a federal one (Belgium); we also find federal States whose prefectoral figure appears only at the tier of the subdivisions of their federated member states (e.g. Germany); and we also find ‘prefects’
in countries with a traditional pretention of the State to be ‘strong’ in its relations with society (typically France or Spain) as well as in countries with a ‘weak’ State (typically in the ‘consociative’ Netherlands, or Scandinavia) (Badie and Birnbaum 1979). All these European countries have in common the fact that they have created and maintained over a long period such a pivotal institution between the political centre and its peripheries.

To go beyond this observation—which is already significant per se,—we hope that our comparative endeavour allows to better comprehend both the differentiated roles and/but the structural homologies and functional equivalences of the various forms that this prefectoral figure takes in so different national sociopolitical contexts and institutional landscapes. As a matter of fact, if the seven abovementioned constitutive elements are common features, these are the intensity of each of these features, their combination and their composition with many other contextual variables which may explain why and how the prefectoral institution takes this or that specific ‘colouring’ in a given country. Let us take an example: the representation and embodiment of the State do not have the same symbolic meaning in different contexts. It is, for instance, very intense in countries with a strong prefectoral tradition, such as France, Italy or Turkey, where can be observed many indicators of the solemnity of the prefectoral institution: the prefecture building is usually a majestic palace located in the very centre of the chief-town of the province; the prefect wears an impressive uniform on the occasion of frequent public ceremonies following a strict ritual organised by a fixed protocol (depositing of a wreath of flowers at a monument, military honours, national anthem and speech), etc. (Tanguy 2012). In contrast, such marks of solemnity are less numerous and intense, or even inexistent in other countries, for instance Germany, Austria or Finland.

1.3 The Prefectoral Figure as a Neglected Research Topic

Our comparative perspective on the prefectoral figure invites to better understand, in the wider scope of ‘policy transfer’ studies (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Saunier 2004; Volden and Shipan 2008; Delpeuch 2008; Dumoulin and Saurugger 2010), cross-border circulation of administrative models and competences (Clavin 2005; Saunier 2008; Rodogno et al. 2014; Kaluszynski and Payre 2013) between European countries. A
series of questions can be posed in that regard: how do these servants of the State who act as intermediators between the political centre and the peripheries, between the power elite and the ordinary people, conceive and thus intend to play out their own institutional role? How do such perceptions and intentions impact their effective manner of exerting their authority? Can researchers detect, beyond the differences among the national contexts, similar working situations, and thus similar practices and discourses, and finally similar cultures at work between these territorial administrators and leaders similarly situated somewhere in between the national and the local tier? In brief, what does it mean to administrate a peripheral ‘meso-level’ territory in Europe from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century? Furthermore, with which goals, competences and (administrative, legal, financial, human) resources are these officials equipped to succeed—or fail—in fulfilling their mission?

To tell the truth, these precise questions pose again the much wider question—which is constitutive of political science—of how humans in society are governed (Favre et al. 2003): this major question, which is addressed in a rather top-down, abstract and normative manner by political philosophy and theory, an empirically rooted study of the prefectoral figure—this territorial ‘Statesman’ or ‘Stateswomen’, to play deliberately with words—can help to pose it from an ‘on-the-ground’ perspective—to borrow an empirical notion that many prefects and governors, when interviewed, seem to greatly value—by focusing on the practical art of governing and administrating a given population on a given territory. Furthermore, these officials have to exert their art in times of great contradictory tensions that we can observe in our polities nowadays, such as:

- The tensions between new and more participative democratic aspirations and conservative attitudes;
- The tensions between the ‘withdrawal’, ‘hollowing out’ (Howlett 2000) and/or ‘come-back’ of the State (Brenner 2004);
- The tensions between continued European integration and Europeanisation of our societies (Duez et al. 2014) and even transnationalisation of public issues and policies (Knill 2005; Holzinger and Knill 2005) and/or the trends towards a renationalisation promoted by many populist leaders;
The tensions between the long-lasting movement of increased ‘devo-

tution’ (in the English sense of the word) or political ‘decentralisa-
tion’ (in Francophone countries) of many powers and competences
from central States to regions, provinces (whatever their names are)
and municipalities, self-governed by their elected bodies and exec-
utives (presidents and mayors), this movement going as far as a
‘dualisation’ of the State (Cole and Stafford 2015) in the UK, Spain
and Italy or its federalisation (Belgium) and/or attempts from the
political centre to recentralise the system (see recent reforms in
Hungary but also in the UK, as well as the attitude of many central
governments in the crisis management of the COVID-19 pandemic).

The tensions between a more and more electronic administra-
tion and digital State whose interfaces with citizens and businesses
become ‘apps’ and/but the strong needs of less digitally literate
populations and remote (countryside, mountains and islands) terri-
tories not to be ‘abandoned’ by the State.

The prefectoral figure, and the whole prefectoral administration (in coun-
tries where there is one) are exactly in the midst—as a nexus or an
epicentre?—of all these multiple ‘recompositions of the State’ (Wright and
Cassese 1996; Pinson 2015; King and Le Galès 2011).

It is very surprising, however, that the prefectoral figure happens to be
the great forgotten actor in recent comparative politics and comparative
public administration studies that have flourished in recent times (see again
Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Fitzpatrick et al. 2011; Raadschelders 2011;
Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2014). State-of-the-art literature has devoted
lots of attention to administrative reforms, to the worldwide diffusion
of New Public Management (Hood 1991), and now to its legacies
(Eymeri-Douzans 2011; Christensen and Lægreid 2017; Bezes 2018), to
agencification (Verhoest et al. 2012) or administrative mergers at a central
level (Cole and Eymeri-Douzans 2010), to changes also in the conditions
of employment and HRM in the civil service (Demmke and Moilanen
2010). As far as lower layers of government are concerned, it seems that
the abundant scientific production on ‘territorial governance’—the label
being now a sort of academic trademark—has been focusing mainly on
reform trends, on novelties and on their conceptualisation (be it ‘strong’
or ‘simple regionalisation’, ‘quasi-federalisation’, ‘cooperative’ or ‘asym-
metrical federalism’, ‘inter-municipal cooperation’, ‘the return of cities’,
‘metropolisation’ etc.), as well as on rearrangements of the administrative structures (mergers, reorganisations, abolitions, privatisations, etc.).

But the political (with the exception of mayors) and administrative actors who give life to all these institutions and are the effective implementers of all these reforms are given little to no scholarly attention. It is especially the case for prefects and comparable territorial representatives of the State, maybe because some researchers obsessed with novelties have tended to neglect such institutional figure inherited from the past, abolished recently in a few countries, and which has never existed either in the UK or in the USA. Since the international production of scientific literature is made more and more in English and published by Anglophone reviews and publishers—such as the present book,—it is not impossible that there might be a cultural bias in such a neglect for the prefectoral figure in international scholarly literature. For instance, one can observe with great surprise that the comparative books devoted to the study of ‘meso-level governments’ in Europe (see Sharpe 1993; John 2001) pay little to no attention to the territorial representatives of the State.

The present book, with its imperfections, is a first attempt to rectify such a scientific injustice committed against the prefectoral institution—an institution which does exist in so many countries where the prefecture is the pivotal institution of the relationship between the central State and the ‘little motherlands’ (Chanet 1996; Grenouilleau 2019), an institution that is bicentennial (even more in Scandinavia) and has fully demonstrated its strong resilience over time, an institution that remains (whatever the wishful thinking promoters of the ‘hollowing-out-of-the-State’ thesis may say, or tactically avoid saying) in a position of nodality (to borrow a key concept from Hood 1983; Hood and Margetts 2007) in the midst of the multi-actor and multilevel policy networks or communities (Rhodes 1997), conflictual and/or cooperative interactions, and power games that characterise the territorial governance of our postmodern polities. These are enough rational motives for devoting to the prefectoral figure as ideal-type and to the actual territorial representatives of the State a collective research project on the European level, grouping together political scientists, historians, public administration scholars, jurists and sociologists from 12 different countries... and an edited volume in the IIAS series at Palgrave Macmillan.
1.4 THE PREFECTORAL FIGURE AS A PERFECT CASE TO INVESTIGATE THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION OF MODELS

The dynamics of ‘circulation’ (Saunier 2004, 2008; Payre 2011), in nowadays globalised world, of ideas and models, repertoires and solutions, instrument(ations) and practices, designs and devices, are more and more extensively addressed by scholars since the ‘global turn of social sciences’ (Caillé and Dufoix 2013). In the more limited domain of the sociology of the State and the study of the politico-administrative institutions which claim their pretention to govern our polities, the detailed study of institutional or legal-model transfers is also of the utmost importance: the prefectoral case is a remarkably meaningful one for questioning the transfers of administrative models between European countries.

What are we talking about precisely? From the very start of our project, ‘Look at the s(S)tate of Prefects!’ we intended to put under scrutiny the presumed exceptionality of the prefect ‘à la française’ in order first to prevent ourselves from taking for granted the ‘dividing line’ between an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’ of what is ‘national’ (to quote Vauchez 2013: 10) and, secondly, to discard the far too simplistic hypothesis of an ‘institutional mimetism’ (Mény 1993) or ‘imitation’ (Jacoby 2000) in the countries supposed to have ‘copied the French model’, the famous countries with a Napoleonic tradition. On the contrary, the colleagues involved in our joint project agreed upon a common understanding of our comparative endeavour as an attempt to question the prefectoral figure in Europe, and the effective territorial representatives of the State in each national context, as the results of a complex and constantly moving dynamic of ‘transplantation, transposition, spread, transfer, import/export, reception, circulation, mixing, and trans-frontier mobility’ (to borrow from William Twining 2006: 510). Such a circulatory perspective enriches the comparison exercise—the answer to Sartori’s question ‘How to compare’?: it is not limited anymore to the ‘inventory of the differences’ (Veyne 1976) and similarities among the different studied cases, but can be enlarged to ‘the analysis of a continuum woven with interconnections’ relating the cases with each other (Geslin 2016: 13).

If we borrow from the legal doctrine (Arnaud 1993), as well as from the sociology of law—the latter having many points in common with the sociology of the State and other governing institutions—the very notion
of the ‘legal’ or ‘normative model’—in French, *modèle normatif* (see Godin 2004: 816),—defined as ‘a work whose exemplary value is a source of inspiration in comparative [administration]’ (Cornu 2007: 595), we can say that the Napoleonic prefect, as designed *ab initio* by *Loi du 28 pluviôse an VIII*, does constitute a ‘legal’ or ‘normative’ model of this kind.

This Napoleonic prefectoral model is characterised by several features. The first and most important one is that the prefect is a political agent of the current government, revocable *ad nutum*. This has never changed: the controversial, highly mediatised evictions of the Prefect of Region Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Henri-Michel Comet (October 2017) or of the Paris Prefect of Police Michel Delpuech (in March 2019, after the violent street protests during the ‘Yellow Jackets’ social movement) are only two recent cases pertaining to the long history of the prefectoral institution in France. Whatever period one considers, the Napoleonic prefect is a ‘*politischer beamter*’, as observed by Max Weber himself (Weber 1919), or what the rulings of the French Council of State have poetically qualified as ‘*fonctionnaires à la discrétion du Gouvernement*’ (literally ‘public servants at the discretion of the Government’).

Secondly, the prefect ‘*à la française*’ is a representative of the central State. The scholarly literature which investigates that dimension has tended to observe the relationship between prefects and the political centre in a rather top-down approach (Chapman 1955; Cobban 1952; Ébel 1999; Fried 1967; Machelon 2002; Machin 1977; Richardson 1966; Siwek-Pouydesseau 1969; Thuillier 1999). Such an approach insists, for instance, on the direct involvement of prefects in the maintenance and the regular falls of French political regimes, and proposes an exegesis of the numerous laws, by-laws and circulars that, over time, have prescribed the role to be played by prefects and the prefectures.

In addition, another avenue of research, initiated more by sociologists, has shed light on the prefect in relation with his/her immediate environment on the ground: the French prefect is there analysed as a major player of the ‘local politico-administrative system’ (SPAL, as coined in the master book by Grémion 1976), where the prefect, in close collaboration with the local ‘notables’ (dignitaries) forming a ‘system’ with him/her (Worms 1966), plays a pivotal role, yet variable and ranging from strong leadership to brokering and arbitration between differentiated elites, stakeholders and interests. The publications that illustrate this research perspective (Crozier and Thoenig 1975; Dupuy and Thoenig 1985; Tobin 1997; Le Yoncourt
have this in common that they insist upon the functional dimension of the prefectoral institution.

To summarise, the normative model of the Napoleonic prefect has three cardinal points: a political administrator who is constantly revocable; a territorial representative of the State who enjoys—despite all the legal and institutional transformations since 1800—important symbolic resources and administrative capacities; and a major player in the history of the French State—from past Jacobinism to current decentralisation.

If this prefectoral model is embedded into a specific national history, it is an undeniable historic observation that it was spread, in various ways and means, in Europe, posing the tough question of how a given foreign normative or institutional model is imported and transplanted into different cultural, political and institutional contexts. The difficulties inherent to such a transplant were addressed in a speech by French lawyer Raymond Saleilles (1855–1912) at the International Congress of Comparative Law, Paris, 1900:

If the legislator wants to do useful work, he must be careful not to transport into the national law a type of institution taken in its abstract form. He must adapt it to the traditions of the country, to customs in particular […]. If, for this adaptation, it is difficult to formulate general laws a priori, it may nevertheless be extremely useful to be enlightened by history and to try, by referring to certain examples of rather hasty imitations and purely factitious adaptations, to define under what conditions and according to what methods, the conclusions provided by comparative law itself can penetrate into national law and into the life of a people. (Saleilles 1905: 11)

To some extent, our contemporary ‘policy transfer studies’ follow, a century later, that comparative law lineage, since they insist upon the distinction between policy paradigms, operational strategies, policy instruments or technical solutions, and upon the great difficulties to successfully transfer paradigms because it requests a transformation of the perceptive and belief systems of the actors in the importing system (Hall 1993; Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Holzinger and Knill 2005; Delpeuch 2009). According to this literature, the success of institutional transplants is conditioned by several factors. One factor is the nature of the model in circulation (Delpeuch 2009: 154). In that regard, the normative model of the Napoleonic prefect has been very differently transplanted in accordance to the proper historicity of each country—especially the
distinction between unitary (more or less decentralised), regionalised and federal States—and, of course, according to the period when the transplant occurred. This is why the word of ‘prefect’ itself is not generically applicable to all Europe: the only free association of defence and promotion on a European level was incidentally baptised *Association européenne des représentants territoriaux de l’État* (AERTE)/European Association of State Territorial Representatives (EASTR)... and this is why we have opted for the same wording on the cover of the present book, and the content, to qualify our research subjects generically.

Another success factor of any institutional transplant is the ways and means of transplanting. In some (limited) cases, the transfer of the prefectoral model was imposed by a foreign power in a situation of military and cultural domination: it was during the period of Napoleonic Europe, which was at its apex circa 1810–1811 (see Broers 1996; Boudon 2006). But in more frequent cases, ‘lesson-drawing’ applied (Rose 1991) in the sense that national governments decided to take their inspiration from a foreign experience without any exogenous constraint. This was typical is the case of Romania. When modern Romania was united and a State founded and consolidated during the nineteenth century, with the support of Emperor Napoleon III of France, the new governors of the young nation lived, thought and debated (in parliament, in government, etc.) in French: admirers of the French system, the young elites of ‘the small Paris’, as Bucharest was then called, almost naturally imported the prefectoral model (as studied in full detail by Sora 2011). A century and a half later, history almost repeated itself: prefects were reinstalled in post-Communist Romania, as narrated in Chapter 18 of the present volume, and their role defined at the beginning of the Millennium by a couple of laws written under the supervision of one of our co-authors, the Francophone and Francophile Professor Marius Profiroiu, then secretary of State of the Ministry of Public Administration and the Interior of Romania. A somewhat similar story happened in post-Communist Poland, where the**

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3 The institutional syncretism went as far as to borrow the terminologies: ‘In France, which served as a model to the Romanian institution, the notion of prefectoral corps comprises prefects, sub-prefects and chiefs of cabinet. This is also used in the Romanian context where the notion of prefectoral corps brings together three types of administrators: the prefects, the directors of prefectures and the chiefs of arrondissements’ (Sora 2011: 13).
contemporary voivode (*wojevwod*), a functional equivalent to the French regional prefect, takes its direct inspiration from France.

It goes without saying that ‘lesson-drawing’ can be stimulated from the outside: for instance, an additional success factor of cross-country transfers in Europe (Knill 2001), in the course of the three latest decades, consisted in the important activity of Western experts in the frame of administrative ‘capacity-building programmes’ tailored for Central and Eastern European countries, candidates to EU accession since the mid-1990s, and then ‘new Member States’ of the Union, and to Western Balkans countries (Knill 2001; Meyer-Sahling 2011; Hadjiisky and Visier 2017). The SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) joint programme of the OECD and the European Commission (on the OECD, see Saussois 2006; Dolowitz, Hadjiisky and Normand 2020), as well as the numerous country-to-country EU ‘Twinning Covenants’ (established as a result of a strong French lobbying) have been—and still are—major frameworks for circulating legal and administrative models of ‘good governance’, among which one co-author of these lines has directly participated in ‘selling’ the prefectoral model to the Prime Ministers of such countries as Bulgaria or Bosnia-Herzegovina—with mitigated success, due to apparent ‘good pupil’ attitude in order to please the European Commission hiding non-congruent practices.

Precisely, a most-recent success factor is the effective intensity of model transfers:

> It ranges from outright imitation – that is the replication without substantial modification of a device, a program [or institution] existing in another context – to inspiration – that is the importation of ideas or general principles which serve as intellectual tools for rethinking a problem and conceiving new answers (without the intention of copying the external solutions) – to various forms of adaptation, hybridisation or synthesis. (Delpeuch 2009: 157)

As a matter of fact, the replication (for sure, never a pure and perfect one) of the Napoleonic model of the prefect is rare enough—the *prefetto* in Italy (Renderaad 1993), the *prefect* in Romania, or in Turkey. In many cases, the normative model has been subject to a variety of hybridisations, adjustments, reinterpretations, acculturations or acclimatisations (on the notion of acclimatisation of ‘circulating’ models or repertoires, see Eymeri-Douzans 2011). Insightfully considered, there are few features in
common between an Austrian *Landeshauptmann*, a Spanish *Gobernador civil* (especially during the long-lasting dictatorship of General Franco) and a Swedish *Landshövding*, often a lady semi-retiring from high-level political life, in the cultural context of a compromise-oriented democracy.

One of the objectives of the present edited volume, as a first collection of national case studies and a first attempt to build a comparison framework on the territorial representatives of the State in European countries is to try and identify any forms of convergences between them (Knill and Lenschow 2005), in a general context marked at the same time by the contradictory trends of more and more cross-border circulation of models, instrumentations and tool kits by means of ‘benchmarking’ and other ‘best practices sharing’ at EU level on the one hand, and increasing autonomisation and particularisation of regional or meso-level territorial institutions on the other hand (Switzer cantons being a typical case, with some having abolished the prefectoral figure and others having maintained it). Many questions are therefore open for investigation, in the following chapters of this volume as for the future. To quote only a few: has the Napoleonic prefect ‘à la française’ been exported so many times? If yes, how and to what extent? How did this model ‘acclimatise’ to the institutional order and bureaucratic organisation specific to each country? Aren’t there several cases, especially in Scandinavia, where the county governor is an institution older than the invention of the modern prefect by Napoleon in 1800, and nevertheless has much in common with it, the Swedish ‘länsstyrelse’ having been designed as early as 1634 as the powerful territorial agent of the then absolutist and imperialist reigning Vasa dynasty? What role(s) do the territorial representatives of the State play in the context of very diverse politico-administrative cultures? What systematic table of the differences and homologies between them can be drawn up from the comparative observation of the national cases?

This collective volume will not have missed its modest goal if it helps its co-authors first, and of course its readers and the wider scholarly community, to better question, and as a result to better comprehend and explain how a given normative model of the prefect ‘à la française’ has been exported and spread—as a matter of fact not that much—on a continental scale and also—which is a distinct, yet somehow related, phenomenon—how a *prefectoral figure*—whose ideal-type we have proposed in Sect. 1.2—has emerged in so many European countries, with lots of variations among the observed cases. This prefectoral figure cut across time, ‘historicity regimes’ (Hartog 2015), differing State
models, and sociopolitical transformations. The prefectoral figure enjoys not only a strong resilience but an astonishing plasticity or ductility. By studying the various forms taken by this prefectoral figure, interpreted, reinterpreted and acclimatised in various contexts—in time and space—this book intends to ‘shed light on the regularities and singularities, the intra- and inter-national dynamics of homogenisation and/but differentiation which affect the styles of government – in their centre-periphery dimension – of our societies’ (Eymeri-Douzans 2006: 281).

1.5  The Prefectoral Figure: A European Ideal-Type with Three Variants

More than a Napoleonic normative model of the ‘préfet’ that would have been exported in a uniform way in Europe and around the world—a mythical narrative which does not correspond to historical truth,—the actual territorial representatives of the State on our continent are very diverse. Their legal status, missions, legal prerogatives, administrative capacities, political economic and social roles are quite different. As a result, the actual ‘métier’ that they are missioned, commissioned to exert is differentiated from one context to another. The French word ‘métier’, distinct from the word ‘profession’ that English and French have in common, is used both in ordinary language and in the social sciences, to refer to a twofold notion which combines in a single word the denotations and connotations of the two English notions of ‘occupation (or job)’ and the one of ‘craft’—the craft precisely required to succeed in doing the job. So, when a Francophone says that someone ‘est/a du métier’, it means that this person is not an impostor but a skilful craftsman/woman in his/her occupation considered as an art: that is why King Louis XIV could elaborate about the ‘métier de Roi’. This notion of ‘métier’ helps to really focus the observation, in an ethnographic way, on the daily practices which are the empirical content of a given occupation. This being clarified, what is common between the ‘métier’—i.e. the job description or, better, the job prescriptions and the necessary politico-administrative craft to fulfil them—of a Switzer ‘Oberamtmann’ exerting in the quiet mountain landscape of a small canton’s subdivision and the ‘métier’ of the prefect of police of Paris, in charge of the security of the highest constitutional authorities of the sixth world power and the security of the millions of inhabitants of a capital city often shaken by social movements and terrorist attacks? What is in common between the ‘métier’ of
a Norwegian county governor and the ‘métier’ of a Turkish prefect? The way in which their ‘worlds’ are constructed in objective and subjective terms, thus their worldviews produced and reproduced (to borrow from the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann 1966) are very likely to be different and pertaining to different cultures (in the comprehensive sense of Geertz 1973)... yet not incomparable, once again.

This is the point when, recalling the first ideal-typical formulation of a European ‘prefectoral figure’ that we have proposed above as a stylised picture and intellectual frame allowing for comparisons of the actual and various territorial representatives of the State observable on the ground, we can try and move a step forward and propose a tentative typology which distinguishes and assembles at the same time three stylised variants of the European prefectoral figure.

1.5.1 The ‘Career Prefect’ Variant

This variant of the prefectoral figure can be observed in countries where the Napoleonic imprint was strong at the beginning of the nineteenth century, such as France obviously, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Holland, as well as in countries where the French model was later on considered as inspiring, such as Romania, Poland, and Turkey, etc. Drawing an ideal-typical figure of the ‘career prefect’ common to these national cases does not intend to ignore the differences between countries whose political histories differ fundamentally on major issues, such as the one of democratisation: let us just consider that French prefects have been the territorial prime servants of a continuously democratic State since 1875, while Spanish ‘gobernadores civiles’—actually often members of the military themselves—have duly served non-democratic governments, and especially the Francoist dictatorship, during the major parts of the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, it is not at all absurd to ‘cluster’ these national cases and identify a common ideal-type of a ‘career prefect’.

This first variant of the prefectoral figure plays a major and nodal role in public policymaking and policy implementation—that s/he usually coordinates to a lesser or wider extent—at territorial level. In addition, s/he
benefits from a strong symbolic legitimacy—given by the legal status, the protocol, the official residence, etc.,—which makes her/him the main incarnation of the State, as well as the legal frame and the bureaucratic procedures make her/him the actual head of the State services in the given territory. Such a Napoleonic prefect, who enjoys both power and prestige, stands as a major actor in the history of the modern State, in the considered countries. Moreover, s/he does not stand alone, as one single person exerting one specific position. The career prefect is surrounded and well supported by a strong prefectoral administration, the prefecture, with its—sometimes numerous—prefectoral employees placed under his/her direct command and control, and sometimes also by a network of sub-prefectures headed by sub-prefects (whatever their exact title is). In addition, each individual prefect, in such a system, is one in a continuous chain of authority and legitimacy, belonging to a ‘prefectoral corps’—in the French wording—or career, which ensures a strong continuity and consistence to the whole prefectoral administration, and therefore gives a ‘collective’ strength to each actual officeholder of the prefectoral dignity. In a nutshell, this first variant of our ideal-typical prefectoral figure is consubstantial of the existence of a well-developed, solid prefectoral institution, in the sense given to that word by the sociological tradition (see Nisbet 1966) with demonstrated administrative capacities, supported by robust institutionalised routines, and animated by a common institutional culture.

Let us consider again the comparison between the French ‘préfet’ and the Spanish ‘gobernador civil’. The latter was created in the first half of the nineteenth century by explicitly borrowing from the Napoleonic prefect, yet quickly evolved in a somewhat different direction: ‘One of the organizers, Javier de Burgos, was an admirer of the French administrative techniques that he had had occasions to apply as a sub-prefect of Almeria under the reign of King Joseph Bonaparte. But, within the context of the Spanish political system, the civil governor quickly deviated from the French model in developing the political role at the detriment of administrative responsibilities’ (Richard 1972: 441). However, half a century later, remarkable similarities between the French and Spanish prefectoral worlds, and worldviews, were still noticeable: the average durations of the

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5 Senator Francisco Javier de Burgos was the designer of the 1833 territorial division of Spain into ‘provincias’, still existing today, and one of the founding fathers of the civil governors placed on top of these provinces.
holders in their given posts were rather similar, the biographic trajectories of ‘préfets’ and ‘gobernadores civiles’ had many aspects in common... and their professional claims happened to be rather similar. It is astonishing to observe the following: in 1901, a ‘Permanent Committee of former governors’ was founded in Madrid, with the purpose of defending their common career interests. On 9th March 1902, this Committee proposed a reform project which intended to radically transform by better institutionalising and professionalising civil governors: creation, like the French corps, of a ‘cuerpo’ of civil governors, whose access would be closed to elected politicians, and organisation of career development protected from political patronage, etc. (Richard 1972). In that same period, similar ‘jurisdictional claims’ (in the terms of the sociology of the professions, see Hughes 1958; Abbott 1988) can be observed in France: created in 1907, the French ‘Association de l’Administration Préfectorale’, which quickly became a quasi-union, advocated for a better protection of prefects and sub-prefects against the political ups and downs by means of the adoption of a statute, the instauration of merit-based recruitment concours, the stabilisation of the career paths, the setting-up of a pension system, etc. (Tanguy 2009, 2013).

Such modest exercises of ‘transnational’ comparison—which should be multiplied and then systematised—give a much more pragmatic and fine-grained dimension to the now classic theoretical perspective in terms of ‘institutional isomorphism’, by investigating how interconnections practically occur between societies. This ‘allows to write the history of these holistic units we study differently (such as [prefectoral] profession, local governments [...] ), thanks to a focus on the non-domestic inputs to their constitution, through the interplay of comparison, rejection, appropriations, etc’. (Saunier 2008: 4–5).

Having identified such an ideal-type variant—the ‘career prefect’—helps to define an intellectual frame and to enclose a space for such fine-grained comparison. The same can be said for the second variant of the European prefectoral figure that we propose to identify.

1.5.2 The ‘Functional Prefect’ Variant

This second ideal-typical variant of the prefectoral figure is, in our view, characteristic of several Western European countries, in particular the federal ones—Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium—where the very idea of a representative of the higher political centre, i.e. the federal
one, within the federated entities (German and Austrian Länder, Swiss cantons, Belgian regions) is evidently excluded by the very principle of federalism. Thus, the territorial delegates of ‘the State’ that can be found—if even they still exist—at the ‘meso’-tier of the inner administrative subdivisions of the Länder, cantons and regions, are delegates of the latter federated states/entities, and of course not representatives of the national higher political centre.

As a direct consequence, these territorial delegates of the federated authorities are not ennobled by the transferred legitimacy of the sovereign Leviathan and the symbols of the Nation, as any French or Italian prefect is. In the sociopolitical and legal context of Western European federal countries, the territorial delegate of federated entities to their sub-entities is therefore an essentially modest figure, whose role is functional and technical. It is not a figure embodying any form of State grandeur, and to tell the truth the figure of the territorial delegate, either a bureaucrat like in some German Länder or an elected figure in some other cases, is not even an important character of the theatre of public life nor a figure of the national political imaginary in these nations.

Quite logically, these low-profile functional (non-)prefects, who are not subject to major ‘shared typifications’ (in the sense Berger and Luckmann 1966, reused by DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 130), do not seem to be participating of, and to be equipped with a well-developed institutional culture as the one of the French or Italian prefectural institutions—culture being defined, with Ann Swidler, as such: ‘Culture consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life […], the analysis of culture proposed here consist[ing] of three steps. First, to offer an image of culture as a ‘tool kit’ of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems. Second, to analyse culture’s causal effects, it focuses on “strategies of action”, persistent ways of ordering action through time. Third, it sees culture’s causal significance not in defining ends of action, but in providing cultural components that are used to construct strategies of action’ (Swidler 1986: 273).

Consistently therewith, in such countries where there is no prefectural culture, there is no (use for a) prefectural corps or corporation, and evidently no prefectural career either. As will be shown in full details in Chapters 7, 14–16 of the present book, in such federal countries,
the territorial delegates of the federated entities in their inner subdivi-
sions are appointed (and in some cases elected) to a given position of
‘Oberamtmann’ or ‘Landräte’ without this being part of a standardised,
codified and ritualised professional process, and thus without any idea of
a ‘career’ to make. This is true to such an extent that in Belgium, for
instance, certain provincial governors are sometimes forgotten in office
for 15 years and even up to 25 years!

To sum up, these modest territorial representatives are individuals with
a job and a function, but they remain a collection of individuals occupying
a similar position without belonging to and forming together a corpo-
ration, a guild, an institutionalised profession united by its institutional
culture.

1.5.3 The ‘Dignified Prefect’ Variant

We propose to denominate ‘dignified prefect’ a third variant of the ideal-
typical prefectoral figure, which reflects and capture in one stylised type
the actual realities of county governors observable in the Nordic part of
Europe, in Sweden, Denmark (until its recent abolition), Norway, Finland
(until its recent transformation into something else)... and to a certain
also in the Netherlands (where the King’s Commissioner is a hybrid,
combining initial Napoleonic with later non-Napoleonic developments).

To prevent any confusion, this figure of an honourable official who has
been dignified with the prestigious title of governor is not an honorary
figure who would enjoy a title without an occupation and play (for free)
a purely ceremonial role devoid of any effective powers or prerogatives.
Quite the other way around, a Norwegian county governor—who is well-
paid by the way—is actually much more powerful a territorial leader than
a Belgium ‘functional’ governor or a Switzer ‘Oberamtmann’; a Swedish
‘landshövding’ bears many influential missions in common with a French
‘préfet’. As a matter of fact, if we were to define a simplistic scale of the
intensity of power between our three variant figures, the ‘career’ prefect
would come first as the strongest, the ‘dignified’ prefect would come
second, before the ‘functional’ prefect that would clearly come in a third
and last position.

So, if we find that the adjective ‘dignified’ fits well to our third idealtypical variant of the prefectoral figure in Europe, it is for two reasons.
The first one relates to the type of constitutional regime of these coun-
tries which are all monarchies, except Finland—but with the former Czar
as Grand-Duke having been replaced by a stronger President than in many parliamentary regimes, elected by universal suffrage and entrusted with an intense incarnating function to embody the Nation and its (often threatened) independence, see the examples of Marshal and President Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim or President Urho Kekkonen. In contemporary constitutional monarchies, it is well-documented that the King or reigning Queen performs a major symbolic mission of embodiment of the unity and continuity of the Crown and the Nation-State. The fact that, in the common cultural context of Nordic consensus-oriented democracies, the county governors are the official representatives of an uncontested King and Crown principle (differently from the Spanish or Belgium governors, for instance) into a given part of the realm dignifies the officeholders, entrusts them with a unique symbolic dignity and almost moral authority which are pre-constitutional and come from the depth of times.

The second reason why the qualification of ‘dignified prefect’ is adequate relates to the personal profiles and appointment logic of these Nordic governors. As will be explained in detail in Chapters 5, 7, 12, 13 and 17 hereafter, the dignity and effective position of county governor is offered there to seasoned high-level national—not local!—politicians who have served in parliament and government, sometimes even as Prime Ministers and are retiring from the national political field. Since and only if they enjoy the esteem of their peers, these persons are rewarded, in recognition of their honourable public career, with a final appointment as governor usually in a county where they were born, or graduated at the university in their younger years.

What is remarkable in the case of these ‘dignified prefects’ who are former politicians and as such party creatures is that they are asked to quit their political party and to proceed to an ‘alternation’ (in the terms of Berger and Luckmann 1966) and transform themselves into a non-partisan supreme authority, like the king they represent, but with a more active role than kings nowadays, playing a role which ranges from the one of a gatherer and facilitator to the one of a compromise-seeking territorial leader, not to forget the role of go-between and messenger between the county and the central government.

As for the second variant of ‘functional prefects’, there is no corporation or profession of ‘dignified prefects’, nor a career as such, as there are for Napoleonic ‘career prefects’. However, Nordic ‘dignified prefects’ have a strongly institutionalised role, deeply rooted in inherited traditions
and customs. In addition, they can rely on a true prefectoral administration placed under their direct command, like French ‘préfets’. Last but not least, they do have a ‘métier’, with precise role prescriptions and well typified, codified requested político-administrative crafts considered as necessary to skilfully exert their governing activity.

The British (Non-)case

In a book written in English and published in London, it would be discourteous not to write a single word about the strange case of the UK, which is remarkable by the absence of a territorial representation of the Crown or of Her Majesty’s Government at the ‘meso-level’ of the counties of inland Britain… whereas the past viceroyys and governors of the Dominions and colonies of the former British Empire, and the actual Governors-General in the States still belonging to the Commonwealth could, in some regards and within certain limits, stand the comparison with our ideal-type of the prefectoral figure.

In the introduction to their classic, Local government in Britain and France. Problems and Prospects, the regretted Jacques Lagroye and Vincent Wright insisted upon such an ‘absence in Britain of an overall supervisory role which is exercised in France, by the prefect’ (Lagroye and Wright 1979: 6). In a country with no written constitution, no administrative law and no doctrine regarding the unity of ‘the State’ as a persona ficta distinct from the Crown, and thus no unified conception of the State administrative apparatus (this being why the UK has proven to be so welcoming to the agencification fashion), it is no surprise that no prefectoral figure has ever emerged.

In his chapter of the abovementioned volume, Laurence James Sharpe wrote: ‘The first characteristic of the British political system that must be noted is that although like France it is a unitary State, it does not have an intermediate level between centre and locality of representatives of central government exercising general supervisory responsibilities for all State functions at the local level. In a word, it does not have a prefectural system. There are a various out-stationed central officials that administer central services directly (for example, social security and employment officers) and other out-stationed officials that exercise various supervisory and inspectoral powers in relation to local government, but there is no centrally appointed common general superior supervising and coordinating these activities as in a prefectural system. Local authorities’ relations with central government are instead mainly conducted directly on a departmental basis, function by function. There is, therefore, no Ministry of the Interior which
surmounts the common general superior system in the localities. The relationship between central and local government in Britain is governed by the legal doctrine of *ultra vires*’ (Sharpe 1979: 43; see also Smith 1967).

### 1.6 Outline and Structure of the Book

The chapters in Part I of the book—Genesis and Historicity—after exposing in details what is/was the French prefectoral model (Chapter 2), put under scrutiny the exportations or transplantations of this model, so as to point out the exact extent and the many limits of institutional mimetism—very strong mimetism in Italy (Chapter 3), a more nuanced situation in Spain (Chapter 4), and an alterity in the Norwegian case (Chapter 5). Part II—Facts and Figures—comprises two chapters only, which are transversal to all the cases and intend to identify some significant singularities and similarities, on the scale of European, regarding on the one hand the social and educational backgrounds (Chapter 6), and on the other hand the modes of recruitment and the career paths (Chapter 7) of the territorial representatives of the State in Europe nowadays. The third part—A Culture at Work: Between Incarnation, Compromise and Politicisation—follows an avenue of research which currently growths in importance, the one of a political sociology of institutions which focuses on an ethnography of administrative work. Chapter 8 closely investigates how prefects gave the State bodily form in nineteenth-century Europe. Chapter 9, in active and friendly complicity with the incumbent, opens the black box of the daily life and agenda of a nowadays Dutch King’s Commissioner, showing how he constantly deals with dualities. Then, Chapter 10 is an attempt to explore some main features of the institutional/professional culture of the members of the French prefectoral corps. Follows Part IV—Role and Power—which grasps various case studies—French regional prefects in Chapter 11, Swedish and Norwegian county governors (Chapters 12 and 13) and the curious case of the elected Switzer prefects—so as to better assess the role—nodal or marginal?—and the effective chances of power of these territorial representatives of the State placed into various politico-administrative configurations. So, while the chapters in Part III study the prefect in action and at work, Part IV considers more the prefectoral figure in interaction
with its institutional, legal, political environment. As for Part V—Between Reform and Abolition: Towards a Europe Without Prefects?—the chapters collected there, with a lucid perception of the constant combination of changes and continuities which characterise long-lasting institutions such as the prefectoral one, consider different and divergent national cases and trends. Chapter 15 describes how the ‘meso-level’ of territorial administration within German Ländere is subject to variations and reforms. Chapter 16 asks what remains of provincial governors in a now federalised Belgium. Chapter 17 exposes the recent reforms that occurred in Finland and explores the possible analogies between regional agencies Chief Directors there and the French Prefect. Chapter 18 tells us the story, common to several post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, of the restoration of a prefectoral institution and figure in Romania, which has taken place in recent decades. As for Chapter 19, it depicts the delicate situation of the Turkish prefects, these custodians of the Kemalist and secularist State, embarked in the midst of the storms of Turkey nowadays.

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