

framework for understanding the emergence of the BLM social movement and its critique of racial differences in surveillance, arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. This book is appropriate for graduate and upper division undergraduate courses in sociology, political science, criminology, law, and African-American studies.

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Sovereignty in Post-Sovereign Society. A Systems Theory of European Constitutionalism. By Jiří Přibáň. London: Routledge, 2015. 262 pp. £34.99 paperback.

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Authors who engage in theoretical puzzles are always welcomed by scientific communities. Authors who engage in solving puzzles by addressing compelling paradoxes of our daily life are even more welcome. This is the case of Jiří Přibáň's book. Following upon a long-standing experience of research, in constitutionalism and systemic theories, Přibáň's work points directly to the heart of one of the modern trinity's pillars: sovereignty.

These are times of crisis for the traditional concept of sovereignty: sovereign States seem to prove, more than ever, the limits of their capacities to hold under stringent control the territories they were expected to govern and testify to the sunset of the golden age of national States as absolute protagonists of the international political stage. Whereas the common sense according to which sovereignty entered into a crisis is not in contention, much less has been done to understand how and to what extent concepts that we still adopt with both descriptive and prescriptive intentions, such as sovereignty, coexist with the transformative social and political processes that unfold in all institutional systems that have been the backbone of sovereign states, whereby the legal system plays a key role. Přibáň's book takes very seriously this coexistence and analyzes the conditions under which we still can and should speak of sovereignty in times of post sovereign societies.

The volume is structured in three parts. It starts with a diagnosis of sovereignty's malaise, assessed from the point of view of the European integration experience. In the European Union, as Přibáň's research insightfully points to, the combination of legal pluralism, national legal traditions, transnational values, and principles embedded in national and subnational institutional practices

and societal understanding of what constitutionalism is all about, the essential notion of sovereignty is put under pressure as it has never been before in modern history. Once the diagnosis is accomplished, the second part of the book opens with an analysis of the concepts and the theories that relate sovereignty to systems. Here the author takes inspiration from Luhmann's approach, and reformulates "the question of sovereignty as a sociological problem of complex power operations communicated through the constitutional state's organization and reconfigured within the supranational and transnational legal and political organization" (p. 17). The theoretical gain of this step is not marginal. Power games cannot be eliminated. They coexist with the sovereign strategies that are aimed at producing legitimacy. This legitimacy does not exclusively come from the level of institution where the power game is played. Legitimacy can be—and can be equally lost or weakened—in a multiple and multi layered matrix of operations where the communications among actors are channeled by several mediums, among which plays politics, even though not in an exclusive manner.

Which is the distinctive feature of these strategies and the subsequent semantics they rely upon? This is the topic of the third part of the book, which draws its concepts from the theory of autopoiesis and addresses the issue of sovereignty in the context of the European polity. The key operational strategy in this context is memory and remembrance. Foundations and justifications are rooted in memory, but memory, to support and to make sovereignty consistent and persistent, needs to be told, to be the subject of a story, of a communicative strategy. The politics of memory is not something that sovereign States enact to justify their power game. The policies of memory are part of a system of communicative actions, involving all actors, beginning with citizens that fill collective actions with significance and meaningful cognitive and cultural anchors; individual actions are experienced as public actions, institutional actions.

The book is a surprise. For readers who are familiar with Přibáň's work, the outstanding work of analysis that is preliminary to the drafting of this book has been well known and the book is the advancement of a journey. But for the readers who approach the volume from the angle of a different scholarship and who eventually work on more empirical subjects, this volume is a bridge that calls to be crossed and enjoyed. Exactly at the moment when the European Union is facing a crisis of institutional identity and seems to seek a solution to the puzzle of the rules of the game, this analysis seems to suggest that the answer or at least the potential to figure out a credible and reliable answer is—maybe dormant—elsewhere. That it lies in the memory as it is communicated by all actors that intervene in the complex and still daily living and transforming

matrix of interactions, among which politics plays the role of a part, not of the dominant part (nor the foundational part).

As a matter of fact, this is the thesis of this volume, finely argued and soundly engineered, that we do need this sovereignty, even though it, operationally speaking, has been far beyond the boundaries that our modern political and social theories tend to relegate it to. Sovereignty is operated by a system of actors' interaction, at the national and the transnational level. Far from being contradictory poles of a line, they coexist because citizens move and act—and ultimately live—at both levels.

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