point on the dangers of backlash. At the same time, we should note that major opportunities to pressure the Sri Lankan government were neglected—notably on the government-declared "safe zones" that were clearly radically unsafe. Being aware of the negative effects of shaming should not preclude frank talk on human rights abuses but should invite more introspection and more curiosity about how righteous messages are received and instrumentalized.

Terman's emphasis on the untrumpeted "benefits of shaming" also resonated with me. She is surely correct is arguing that many of these benefits arise whether or not the expressed goal of reforming behavior is achieved. While my own study of shame ranges more widely and perhaps eccentrically, I too have found that shaming is only successful in reforming people's behavior under rather specific circumstances—and I would list some of the key ones as shared values, respect for the shamer, and the deployment of mild shaming rather than humiliation. I would also emphasize that shaming can easily feed directly into violence as the shamed (and perhaps humiliated) party attempts physically to eliminate the source of shame. Rather than an attempt at reforming someone, shaming often has more to do with offloading your own shame, avoiding uncomfortable introspection, affirming your membership of some community, and/or trying to keep someone "in their place". (The idea that actions may succeed despite failing in their expressed goals is explored, more widely, in Ruben Andersson and David Keen, *Wreckonomics: Why it's time to end the war on everything*, Oxford University Press, 2023.) In general, while my own conclusions were reached via a very different route from Terman's, they are very much in line with her findings.

There is an important political economy dimension here that is not part of Terman's brief but nevertheless worth stressing. Where shaming is backed up by sanctions of one kind or another, potential benefits for the shamed government may certainly arise from the shaming, as Terman emphasizes. This government may also derive benefits from pointing to the shamer as the source of suffering, from increased dependence on government patronage in conditions of scarcity, and from the profits accruing to those who are able to breach international sanctions. Thus, it is not just shaming but the practical accompaniments of shaming that can be counterproductive when it comes to reforming behavior or removing abusive governments. But Terman's overall framework remains highly relevant: the intervention should not be designed in isolation from likely adaptations.

So does the analysis in *The Geopolitics of Shaming* mean we should not be actually engaging in shaming when it comes to international politics? Terman's answer, as so often with careful academic studies, is: it depends. I concur with Terman that while pure condemnation is risky, an appeal to shared values can sometimes work, particularly when there is some kind of established relationship

(including leverage, trust, and indeed shared values) between shamer and shamed. When it comes to the human rights abuses of an adversary rather than an ally, I am also somewhat sympathetic to Terman's suggestion that "a strategy of engagement, not isolation, provides the best chance for promoting human rights in the long term… attempting to isolate an abuser is likely to backfire" (p. 66). That said, it is worth stressing that in practice the attempt to "engage" can easily shade into complicity—as it did in Sri Lanka in 2008–2009. Reluctance to shame also proved deeply damaging during Sudan's late 1980s famine, which I was able to research in some detail (David Keen, *The Benefits of Famine*, 1994). Conversely, public exposure—when it belatedly transpired—helped to end that famine as well as improving humanitarian access to southern Sudan in the 1990s. Even then, Terman's warning about the dangers of backlash was hardly irrelevant: in the context of that public exposure, Sudan shifted from being a (tentative) Western ally toward much greater ties with the Middle East from the 1990s, with a loss of "leverage" for Western governments that persists to the present day.

Looking forward, a key step may be to identify those elements of shared beliefs and values that do exist—and to engage with those parts of a shamed polity that share such values. (When it comes to negotiating access for humanitarian aid, the International Committee of the Red Cross has often looked for ways in which warring factors may actually share elements of humanitarian ideology with humanitarian aid agencies, a rather different approach from simply condemning them for blocking aid.) In general, I think we need more frank talking rather than less. But for the would-be shamer, keeping an eye on how you yourself are perceived—and used—by those you are shaming would also seem to be vital. Terman's book is hugely helpful in putting the possibility of backlash on the map.

Response to David Keen's Review of *The Geopolitics of Pressure: When Human Rights Shaming Works—and When It Backfires*

— Rochelle Terman (iD)

I am grateful to David Keen for this thoughtful engagement with my book. I especially appreciate his attention to where our work overlaps and diverges. As he observes, we often reach similar conclusions through different lines of thinking. Here, I want to elaborate on two areas of departure and convergence between our respective approaches to shaming.

First, Keen's attention to the emotion of shame, and its role in individual psychology, is a useful complement to my book's more macro approach, in which I explicitly bracket the *feeling* of shame to concentrate on the *social*

process of shaming. As Keen helpfully reminds us, shame and shaming are deeply intertwined. The psychological handling of shame—particularly through compensation, offloading, or projective identification—is central to the process by which shaming leads variably to restitution or violence. Shame (a painful emotion) and shamelessness (a common defense) are two sides of the same coin. Indeed, it is interesting how these intrapsychic conflicts appear to mirror interpersonal and even international dynamics. Future analysts must take up the challenging yet critical task of elucidating precisely how these mechanisms aggregate across levels of analysis. Appreciating the microfoundations around shame will enable a more comprehensive understanding of shaming between people and between nations.

Second, I would like to unpack a suggestion that Keen offers toward the end of his review that would-be shamers try to "identify those elements of shared beliefs and values that do exist—and to engage with those parts of a shamed polity that share such values." This prescription rests on an empirical claim, one that seems quite intuitive to me: effective shaming relies in part on emphasizing shared values. But why is this the case? That is, by what causal logic would highlighting shared values optimize the effectiveness of shaming and minimize its potential for backlash?

There are a few possibilities. One involves a mechanism toward compliance that runs through personal normative beliefs. On this view, shaming—when done well—operates by recruiting the subject's own, sincerely held values, instilling a kind of productive shame that drives the desire to align one's behavior with one's beliefs. Put differently, identifying shared values works by persuading actors that what they are doing is genuinely wrong according to their own standards. When shamer and target hold very divergent values, shamers are more likely to condemn violations based on *their* own norms rather than those of the target. Shamed for things they never considered unacceptable, targets may well ask, "why should I care?"

However, there are good reasons to question this theoretical tie between shaming, compliance, and sincerely held beliefs. In my book, I argue that shaming—even effective shaming—does *not* require that the target share or internalize the norm of the stigmatizer. I raise the example of individuals moving between cultures, who are often shamed based on norms that are entirely foreign and external to them, and yet change their behavior to fit in nonetheless. Likewise, political actors will often behave strategically to shape the judgment of others regardless of whether they genuinely believe what they are doing is right or wrong.

How, then, would identifying shared values be an effective tactic? I want to suggest a different mechanism, one that relies less on sincerely held beliefs than on the relational aspects at play. When a shamer emphasizes shared values, she is tapping not only into something internal to the target but also into the nature of the relationship between them. Specifically, she is signaling that shaming is motivated by a sincere commitment to the norm and not hostility toward the target per se. My book argues that actors have an incentive not to antagonize their friends, allies, and strategic partners. As a result, their rhetorical approach tends to be less stigmatizing. Emphasizing shared values works by revealing information about one's intentions toward, and relationship to, the target; it communicates affinity and a desire to cooperate. It is this very affinity that makes shaming effective and motivates the target to comply. Those who seek to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship are incentivized to accommodate their partner's demands, regardless of whether they believe such demands are morally correct.

An analogous mechanism occurs when the shamer is hypocritical. Shaming mired in hypocrisy often fails to produce compliance, but not because hypocrisy signals different values per se. Rather, hypocrisy shapes perceptions of motive. When people are shamed by hypocrites, they can plausibly assume that the shamers are motivated by nefarious intentions, a desire to weaponize norms in order to attack or degrade the target. Such perceptions drive the kind of defensive reaction that fuels backlash.

Viewed in this light, we can see once again how Keen and I reach similar conclusions through different causal pathways, ontologies, or levels of analysis. Such convergences and divergences will, I hope, contribute to the burgeoning conversation around shame and shaming in world politics.