Reviews

The Geopolitics of Shaming: When Human Rights Pressure Works—and When It Backfires, by Rochelle Terman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2023), 216 pp., cloth $99, paperback $29.95, eBook $29.95.

doi:10.1017/S0892679424000212

At the end of the Second World War, the international community embarked upon one of the most important cooperative endeavors in history, the creation of an international human rights regime. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights served as the foundation of what would become a complex system of multilateral treaties, binding states to promote and protect human rights standards. And yet, in the years and decades since, states have continued to routinely violate human rights international obligations, challenging the power of the regime to impose the observance of norms while lacking enforcement mechanisms. Ultimately, a state's compliance with human rights obligations rests on its willingness to implement international norms. Beyond the voluntary fulfillment of those obligations, and non-armed coercive tools, such as diplomatic and economic sanctions, very few strategies are left in the hands of the international community to remedy the shortcomings of the modern human rights regime. One of these tools considered by states to be effective at exerting pressure on violators of human rights obligations is naming and shaming. Naming and shaming works as an enforcement mechanism of compliance with international norms by publicly discrediting governments that violate human rights obligations, tarnishing their reputation and ultimately their good standing within the international community. However, whether and how the strategy works in shifting state behavior is the source of extensive scholarly debate. Rochelle Terman's book *The Geopolitics of Shaming: When Human Rights Pressure Works—and When It Backfires* represents an expert and, in some regards, novel analysis of naming and shaming.

Terman offers a general theoretical framework based on a "relational approach" (p. 3), which suggests that the choice of a state to resort to naming and shaming, the specific type of pressure exerted on a target state, and the target's response to public criticism are inherently a political process, influenced by the relationship between states.

Before delving into a detailed study of the relational approach, Terman offers a general description of "why and how governments accuse and shame other governments for human rights violations" (p. 27) and of "the effects of international shaming on state

Ethics & International Affairs, 38, no. 2 (2024), pp. 232–238.

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs

behavior" (p. 47). On one side, Terman suggests that there are three different incentives behind states' condemnation of another government's human rights violations. First, states might have "behavioral preferences" driven by a true belief in the goodness of a norm and/or by the benefits they will gain following compliance with the norm by the targeted government. Second, states might publicly shame others for their human rights violations because of "social pressure" or "metanorms" (p. 37); namely, by earning international or domestic reputational benefits through the public condemnation of the target's violations. Last, governments might want to shame other countries in order to impose a stigma on the violators. In what the author calls "weaponized shaming" (p. 40), the intent is to create a moral global hierarchy and inflict reputational damage on the target. On the other side, Terman suggests that target states might answer in three different ways. First, they might acknowledge the legitimacy of the condemnation and comply with the pressure. Second, target governments could deflect the allegations in ways that minimize or justify the violations. Last, states can respond with defiance, showing overt disregard for the pressured norms and at times ramping up violations. Terman posits that whether one or other of these scenarios happen is the result of the relationship between states.

First and foremost, the book suggests that when the shamer and the target state have friendly relations, the chances of tarnishing or jeopardizing an advantageous economic, military, or strategic alliance are greater than when the shamer and target states do not have similar ties. Thus, the existence or lack thereof of those ties influences states' resort to naming and shaming, making it less costly and more likely when the target is an adversary than when the target is a diplomatic friend. Second, Terman argues that when partner states are targeted, naming and shaming is more lenient than when adversaries are criticized. Third, she concludes that targeted states' responses vary based on the nature of the dyadic relationship; friendly targets are more willing to accept the pressure from strategic allies and change their behavior than political adversaries, which usually respond with defiance.

In illustrating these points, Terman provides several examples. The book focuses extensively on the reluctance of the United States to harshly condemn Saudi Arabia for the murder of the regime dissident and *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey. At stake for the United States was the loss of economic and strategic ties with Saudi Arabia (pp. 130–39). Similarly, Muslim countries, especially in Africa, have been silent on the persecution of the millions of Uighurs in China, because of Chinese investments and diplomatic and economic influence in the region.

In contrast, Terman describes how naming and shaming is frequently used against foes much more vociferously and decisively. She recalls how some North American and European countries became decidedly critical of the Iranian government, considered a threat to the stability and peace in the Middle East, by publicly and strongly condemning the death sentence by stoning of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, accused of adultery (pp. 139–45).

The last piece of Terman's theoretical framework describes the targeted country's reaction to naming and shaming. On one side, a state publicly criticized for its actions by its allies is more likely to concede to some of the pressure by shifting its behavior toward compliance with international human rights standards, in an attempt at preserving the strategic relationship. Terman suggests that the

Saudi regime reacted to the criticism by the United States following Khashoggi's killing by releasing from prison some political dissidents and argues that had the Biden administration continued to pressure the Saudi regime for change, rather than recognizing the immunity of Saudi Arabian crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, naming and shaming would have led to a greater set of human rights reforms in the country (p. 138).

On the other side, states shamed by adversaries often respond to public criticism and recommendations by discrediting the source from which the naming and shaming originates or by ignoring the suggested policy reforms. For example, Iran accused Western states of promoting misinformed propaganda about the laws of the country and the specific accusation against Ashtiani, while specifically targeting the United States for its own implementation of capital punishment (p. 150). Similarly, China's response to the accusations by the United States of persecutions in Xinjiang resulted in propaganda aimed at discrediting the U.S. response, focusing on its domestic violations of minorities' rights and imperialism abroad, arguing that U.S. criticism of China was aimed more at stigmatizing the country than promoting human rights principles (p. 63). Also, when the shamer and the targeted country are enemies, naming and shaming might backfire by prompting the targeted state to implement reforms that openly challenge universal human rights standards, especially when the leader has a chance of gaining public domestic support for standing up to international adversaries. For example, Russia's anti-homosexuality bill during the months leading up to the highly internationally publicized 2014 Winter Olympics strengthened Putin's hold on power and increased domestic and some other international support from citizens and countries that saw the Western imposition of norms protecting gender identity and sexual orientation as a form of "cultural imperialism" (p. 65).

Ultimately, the book suggests that naming and shaming is rarely effectively used in situations where it could work—namely, in relations between partners—but rather is widely implemented not only where it does not contribute to compliance with international norms but also where it is most likely to backfire. Adding to the complexity of the argument, Terman questions suggestions in earlier scholarship that transnational pressure—in which domestic advocacy groups within the targeted state and their counterparts in the international system or in other countries work together to exert pressure—leads to improved compliance with human rights standards within the targeted country. The book provides examples showing that when international criticism is framed by leaders of targeted countries as an illegitimate interference, as an attempt to subjugate the targeted state, and as a strategy to morally stigmatize the government's policies, then citizens might develop a nationalistic opposition to the pressure exerted on their country and ask their leaders to stand up to the shamer. This was the case in Uganda, where domestic and international human rights groups advocated against a long-standing custom opposing the recognition of gay rights. The Ugandan government framed this advocacy and international pressure as cultural neocolonialism (p. 60). The consequence was a very public signing of the Anti-Homosexuality Act by President Museveni, intending to show that Uganda's independence had been defended against undue international interference in local customs and laws. Similarly, local human rights groups operating within a targeted country, which are often associated with the international shamer, might suffer a decrease in support within the shamed country, even among citizens sympathetic to the need for human rights reforms, leading to instances where the human rights groups actually ask for the international pressure to stop. In Nigeria, the naming and shaming by international organizations and domestic human rights activists over the government's decision to stone to death Amina Lawal in 2002, as a punishment for adultery, backfired when it was reported that the international campaign to stop the execution presented incorrect information about the case and stereotyped Muslim and Nigerian culture (p. 61). Local Nigerian activists were accused of working with international human rights groups to spread false information and stigmatize Nigerian laws. Domestic human rights groups became the target of retaliatory acts, which prompted them to request that international pressure stop.

Terman's research challenges the conventional wisdom developed by a long-standing international relations scholarship about how we understand the effectiveness and implementation of shaming. The book does not ask readers to think of naming and shaming as a hopeless mechanism of human rights enforcement but rather as a more complex phenomenon in which the quality of dyadic relations between shamers and targets greatly affects the likelihood of shaming being employed and ultimately its effectiveness. *The Geopolitics of Shaming* offers practitioners and scholars a compelling analysis of the omnipresent politics behind the efforts to uphold the global human rights regime.

—ROSA ALOISI

Rosa Aloisi is an associate professor of international politics, international law, and human rights and the chair of the Department of Political Science at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Her research focuses on the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law instruments.

The Ethics of Special Ops: Raids, Recoveries, Reconnaissance, and Rebels, by Deane-Peter Baker, Roger Herbert, and David Whetham (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 255 pp., $110 cloth, $110 eBook.

doi:10.1017/S0892679424000182

The growing number of irregular, and often politically sensitive, threats to national security has led governments around the world to increasingly rely on remotely piloted aircraft, cyberwarfare, and special operation forces (SOF). While the ethics of conventional military operations, drone warfare, and cyberwarfare have gotten significant attention over the years, the ethics of special operations has remained largely overlooked. *The Ethics of Special Ops: Raids, Recoveries, Reconnaissance, and Rebels*, by Deane-Peter Baker, Roger Herbert, and David Whetham, remedies this oversight.

The authors start by distinguishing special operations from conventional military operations. Baker, Herbert, and Whetham define special operations as those military operations that are conducted by special forces (p. 12). While this might seem like a vacuous claim, it carries quite a bit of theoretical as well as doctrinal significance