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Introduction

Human rights are a moral concern, but also a geopolitical one. As a set of normative principles and ideals, the global human rights project has achieved unparalleled success, attaining nearly universal endorsement from around the world. As a set of practices, however, human rights are routinely and ubiquitously violated. Today an international framework has emerged to define, promote, and monitor human rights, encompassing numerous institutions, organizations, and mechanisms. And yet, in an inescapably anarchic world, there remains no centralized authority to enforce compliance with human rights agreements. Instead, the punishment of violations largely depends on the discretion of other actors in the international system—most importantly, other states.

States enforce compliance with human rights norms in multiple ways. The most common tool in this regard is "naming and shaming"—publicly condemning governments for abusing human rights. By shaming violators, states attempt to enforce a norm by imposing social and political costs on violations. While some states occasionally supplement verbal criticism with other kinds of pressure, such as economic sanctions or military intervention, shaming is by far the most common mode of enforcement, practiced by virtually every state since the inception of the human rights regime.[1]

International enforcement is certainly not the only way to promote compliance with human rights norms; other processes such as learning, persuasion, and technical assistance can also be important. But scholars and

1. Donnelly 1986, 608.

activists alike place special emphasis on enforcement as an essential, if not *the* most essential mechanism to protect human dignity around the globe. A long research tradition in the social sciences demonstrates that strong enforcement is critical for the maintenance of normative orders, including the international human rights regime.[2] As discussed in the next section, the international relations (IR) literature provides several important theories on the impact of international shaming and other forms of normative pressure on states' domestic practices. Several quantitative studies suggest that shaming leads to an improvement in human rights conditions.[3] Moreover, a plethora of case studies document "success stories" of governments reforming their behavior following global pressure.[4]

Yet to be effective, international human rights enforcement must overcome two substantial obstacles. First, foreign policymakers must voluntarily choose to punish other countries for human rights violations, but they often hesitate to do so. Enforcing human rights requires some amount of effort and resources, the beneficiaries of which are citizens of other countries. While some leaders may genuinely support the human rights project, they must balance these principles against their own national interests, such as security and trade. Even when punishment is purely rhetorical, criticizing other governments can generate serious political risks by upsetting a valuable strategic relationship. For example, China's allies—including many Muslim nations—have refused to condemn China's alleged abuse of Uyghurs in Xinjiang because they fear undermining a profitable partnership. "Few countries are willing to put the economic benefits of good relations with China at risk," observed Daniel Russel, former assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "let alone find themselves on the receiving end of Chinese retaliation."[5] And yet, despite these disincentives, we still see leaders shaming other countries quite often—even where there appear to be few direct benefits from doing so. Why, and under what conditions, do states punish human rights violations in other countries?

Second, even when leaders manage to condemn human rights violations abroad, their efforts are not always effective. International shaming often fails to produce any meaningful change in the target country. In some cases, it can even backfire by provoking resistance and worsening human rights

2. Axelrod 1986; Bendor and Swistak 2001; Carraro 2019; Coleman 1994; Ellickson 1994; Moravcsik 2000.
3. Cole 2012; Hendrix and Wong 2013; Krain 2012; Murdie 2009; Murdie and Davis 2012b.
4. Franklin 2008; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999.
5. Perlez 2019.

practices. For example, after Western countries condemned Uganda and Nigeria for attempting to criminalize homosexuality in 2014, some observers reported a spike in human rights violations of LGBT people.[6] Early scholarship on international norm dynamics recognized the potential for shaming to be counterproductive but did not plumb the depths of this phenomenon. In the last few years, global events have sparked renewed scholarly interest in norm resistance and backlash, generating a number of valuable studies on the topic. And yet a robust theoretical account of these myriad effects remains to be made. When does shaming lead to an improvement in human rights conditions, and when does it backfire? And in cases when shaming *is* counterproductive, why do actors continue to do it?

The Argument in Brief

In this book, I address these questions by developing a *relational approach* to the study of international human rights shaming. Instead of treating norms like human rights as the moral consensus of a singular, amorphous "international community," I propose that we obtain better analytic leverage by thinking of shaming as a strategic interaction between discrete actors. As a form of social sanctioning, shaming occurs in and through preexisting relationships, particularly the relationship between shamer and target. The key insight of a relational approach is that we cannot understand human rights shaming—including its likely effects—without appreciating the relational context in which it occurs.

Starting from this approach, I construct a theory of interstate shaming that accounts for both its causes and consequences in world politics. I start by explaining why states condemn other countries for human rights violations. Despite its reputation as a tool to deter abuse, shaming is not always designed to secure compliance with human rights norms. Rather, leaders wield shaming as a weapon in geopolitical struggles for power, status, and legitimacy. When it comes to human rights violations, leaders seeking to protect their strategic interests may hesitate to shame friends and allies. To reproach a partner requires strong preferences for norm-compliant behavior—a rarity given the nature of human rights norms. In contrast, leaders will condemn rivals, regardless of genuine normative beliefs, to inflict political damage and gain a strategic advantage on the world stage. As a result, countries shame their rivals in particularly stigmatizing, sensationalist, and

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6. Onishi 2015.

inflammatory ways. Critically, it is rational for leaders to continue shaming adversaries even if their efforts fail to change the target's behavior and even if those efforts backfire and exacerbate violations.

Understanding when and how countries shame is important because different kinds of normative pressure lead to different outcomes. The key insight is that shaming transmits vastly different signals depending on the relationship between source and target. The threat to a valued political relationship gives criticism exchanged between friends and allies greater leverage. Moreover, because there are few *strategic* incentives to reproach a friend, shaming in such cases serves as a credible signal to third-party observers that a genuine violation took place, damaging the target's reputation. Shaming from rivals, on the other hand, is easier to ignore. Because there is no valued relationship to protect, target states have fewer incentives to acquiesce to the shamer's demands. Such accusations are also less credible; they are widely seen as a cynical attempt to attack the target for political reasons. Governments can safely reject and deny such accusations without damaging their international reputation or domestic legitimacy.

Importantly, shaming from adversaries not only fails to secure compliance but can backfire by stimulating *defiance* in the target country. That is, it can be rational for leaders to react to foreign criticism by doubling down and ramping up norm violations. Why? Because when governments are shamed by adversaries, their domestic audiences can plausibly assume that the shamers, motivated by hostile intentions, are attempting to weaponize norms in order to degrade the status of their country. For these domestic publics, foreign shaming transforms local policy issues into an international battle over status and submission, driving defensive reactions that delegitimize outside criticism and place higher value on norm violation as a symbol of national identity and resistance. A popular defensive reaction generates incentives for rulers to resist international shaming, not out of an intrinsic desire to violate norms but rather to reap the political rewards generated at home. In such cases, shaming is not merely irrelevant but counterproductive by encouraging further offenses and even retaliatory actions.

In short, human rights enforcement is a deeply political process that operates in and through geopolitical relationships, is deployed and resisted for strategic purposes, and is interwoven in the nexus of global conflict. Adversaries are quick to condemn human rights abuses but often provoke a counterproductive response. Allies are the most effective shamers, but they are reluctant to impose social sanctions. Thus, shaming is most common in situations where it is least likely to be effective. This is not to say that such

efforts are *always* counterproductive. In my theory, shaming can produce compliance, defiance, or deflection, depending on the relational conditions in which it unfolds. By combining these causal logics into a single framework, this book aims to develop a theory of international norm enforcement that accounts in equal measure for conflict and conformity.

The findings have important implications for both practitioners and scholars. For human rights promoters, this study provides not only a warning on the potential risks of shaming but also guidance on how to use this tool more effectively. The key insight is that, when it comes to enforcing human rights, the *critic* matters as much as (and perhaps more than) the *criticism*. Shaming associated with a geopolitical adversary is likely to backfire owing to the presumption of hostile motives, regardless of content. Shaming from an ally is more credible, and thus more effective, but also more difficult to mobilize. By delineating these mechanisms, this study provides practical guidance for governments and civil society actors who want to promote human rights abroad.

For scholars, the book extends and amends our understanding of international norms and their effect on state behavior. I argue that shaming exerts heterogeneous effects—a spectrum from compliance to defiance—depending on certain conditions. Importantly, the theory looks for these conditions in the shaming process itself, namely, the strategic interaction between shamer and target. This approach departs from many existing explanations for norm adoption and resistance, which emphasize the causal role of autonomous state attributes such as domestic political structure, material interests, or local culture. My theory, in contrast, shows how reactions to compliance pressures are generated through a process that is *endogenous* to international human rights enforcement. In pursuing this argument, this book expands our understanding of the ways in which norms shape the identity and interests of states even as they resist their governance.

More broadly, a deeper understanding of the strategic logic of norm enforcement opens new avenues for thinking productively about the relationship between norms and power politics in IR theory. Human rights shaming is often disparaged as hopelessly "politicized": states punish violations selectively, attending more to their geopolitical interests than universal moral principles. Indeed, my findings confirm that selective enforcement is rampant in the human rights arena. This does not mean, however, that such efforts amount to meaningless "cheap talk," or that the norms undergirding them are weak or irrelevant to political outcomes. On the contrary, states instrumentalize and manipulate human rights precisely *because* of

their normative power, not their lack thereof. Insofar as enforcement is an inherently relational process, politicization is integral to—not a corruption of—the global human rights project.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to set the conceptual foundation for the rest of the book. I first situate the study in the scholarly debate on international norms and shaming, elaborating both the conventional wisdom and the lingering questions concerning shaming's variegated effects. The next section clarifies some conceptual issues and describes my approach to shaming as a form of social sanctions that occur in and through relationships. I then introduce my empirical strategy and preview the evidence. The chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations and disclaimers.

The Topic

This book contributes to a large literature on norm enforcement in international politics. The general propositions I develop should offer insights for the causes and outcomes of interstate normative pressure in a wide array of cases, including those involving political-economic sanctions or even military force. That said, my discussion in this book focuses on a specific mode of international norm enforcement: "shaming," or the public expression of disapproval by states of specific actors—typically other states—for perceived violations of appropriate conduct (for example, protecting human rights).

My reasoning for this focus is twofold. First, shaming has emerged as the chief tool of norm enforcement in international politics. Shaming is practiced routinely by virtually every state in the modern era, whereas only the most powerful states are able to wield economic or military resources to coerce compliance. Moreover, economic or military tools in international human rights enforcement are typically mobilized only *after* the application of rhetorical punishment. Given its ubiquity and substantive importance, shaming offers ideal grounds for testing general theories of norm enforcement.

Second, shaming provides strong inferential leverage for a theory that views norm enforcement as a fundamentally political process, as mine does. Some scholars have dismissed shaming as toothless "cheap talk": too weak and frivolous to impose a meaningful coercive effect.[7] But if it is shown that this relatively "low-cost" form of norm enforcement is the domain of fierce geopolitical struggle over power, status, and legitimacy, it would stand to

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7. Krasner 1999; Simmons 2009, chap. 4.

reason that the same dynamics should go a long way toward explaining more costly cases of norm enforcement as well. Simply put, shaming represents a "least-likely case" for a theory of norm enforcement that focuses on geopolitical relationships. Therefore, throughout this book I use the terms "shaming," "enforcement," and "pressure" interchangeably, with the understanding that shaming is an especially important *subset* of the broader phenomenon of norm enforcement and international pressure in world politics. The next section elaborates my conceptualization of shaming.

Shaming is performed by numerous actors, including, among others, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IOs), and media outlets.[8] Without denying the importance of other actors, this book devotes special attention to shaming between *states*. When it comes to international norm dynamics, states play an outsized role in several respects. First, while they vary in power, states generally wield greater power than human rights organizations or other nonstate actors, power that extends beyond military power or economic coercion. Even if countries fail to back up their rhetoric with material force, official statements often yield considerable symbolic importance—for example, by signaling future consequences.

Moreover, states exert considerable influence over the activities of nonstate actors. For example, they shape the work of NGOs by enabling or restricting financing.[9] Likewise, powerful countries direct the activities of IOs through institutional power (such as the veto), donor support, or ideological influence.[10] This is not to say that nonstate actors are unimportant, only that they must work in an inescapably state-centric environment in which governments hold a unique position of influence. Indeed, it is for good reason that activists and civil society typically direct their work at securing *state* support for the condemnation of human rights violations abroad.[11]

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8. Amanda Murdie produced groundbreaking work on shaming by NGOs; see, for example, Murdie 2014; Murdie and Davis 2012a, 2012b; Murdie and Peksen 2014, 2015. On IOs, see Carraro, Conzelmann, and Jongen 2019; Koliev 2020; Koliev and Lebovic 2018; Lebovic and Voeten 2006; Squatrito, Lundgren, and Sommerer 2019. For other actors, see Hafner-Burton and Ron 2013; Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007.

9. Chaudhry 2022; Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015.

10. Johnson 2011.

11. For example, Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink (1999, 23) explain how transnational advocacy networks lobby Western governments and publics. "Moral persuasion," they write, "involves networks persuading Western states to join network attempts to change human rights practices in target states."

Finally, while the shaming literature devotes considerable attention to nonstate actors, the activities of states are surprisingly neglected relative to their importance. Focusing too much on nonstate actors could bias our understanding of the nature of international shaming and generate misleading conclusions. For these reasons, I put states at the center of my inquiry.

Existing Approaches

Shaming has attracted significant attention in IR. Early research on international norms revealed the power of shaming to improve states' human rights behavior, contrary to realist expectations. Subsequent research has complicated this view by highlighting the myriad outcomes of international normative pressure, including resistance and backlash. Today the literature has culminated in a key question for which we lack satisfying answers: Why does international shaming result in compliance in some cases and resistance in others?

THE POWER OF SHAME

Modern scholarship on international norms emerged in the 1990s as a response to materialist approaches that dominated the field of IR. Much of this research sought to explain how principled norms such as human rights influence states' behavior in the absence of centralized, material enforcement. One influential paradigm emphasized the role of social inducements and shaming in advancing compliance.[12] Broadly speaking, shaming was thought to promote compliance by increasing the social and political costs associated with norm violation. In many ways, this argument still commands the conventional wisdom and so warrants further unpacking.

According to influential theories, international shaming promotes compliance with human rights via two broad channels: from "above" and from "below."[13] Shaming exerts pressure on governments "from above" by imposing social and reputational costs that violate international norms. For constructivists, shaming threatens the prestige, status, and identity of those states (or the leaders heading them) that view themselves as members of the

12. Other mechanisms have been proposed to explain norm compliance, including learning (Checkel 2001), persuasion (Risse 2000), and general isomorphism (Meyer et al. 1997). Here I focus on theories that emphasize rationalist incentives, wherein social pressure affects the cost-benefit calculations of policymakers regardless of their normative beliefs.

13. The "above" and "below" analogy comes from Alison Brysk (1993).

"international community."[14] For liberal institutionalists, states may not care about social approval per se, and yet shaming may reveal credible information on a country's general reputation for compliance, threatening other kinds of international benefits such as trade agreements or foreign aid.[15]

International normative pressure is thought to influence governments "from below" by empowering pro-compliance constituencies and fueling social mobilization.[16] International actors and institutions can provide credible information to domestic audiences, building consensus about a target state's human rights violations.[17] They can also introduce powerful ideas and discourses that cultivate rights-consciousness and mobilize local stakeholders to claim those rights from their government.[18] Finally, increased international attention can legitimate the activities of local NGOs and human rights advocates, broadening their basis of support and enhancing their political efficacy.[19] Indeed, many scholars believe that foreign shaming greatly empowers local human rights defenders.[20]

These two pathways—from above and below—often work in tandem. Indeed, some of the most influential theories of international shaming—including Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's "boomerang" and Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Sikkink's "spiral" models—attribute human rights improvements to the *combined* efforts of domestic civil society and the international community.[21] Both forms of influence adhere to a similar logic: shaming increases the costs associated with norm violation, whether through peer approval, foreign donors, or domestic publics. Governments comply with human rights demands to minimize these costs and salvage their legitimacy.

14. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Goodman and Jinks 2013; Greenhill 2010; Johnston 2001; Katzenstein 1996.

15. Lebovic and Voeten 2009.

16. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Ropp and Sikkink 1999, 5; Simmons 2009, chap. 4. A different pathway of influence works through certain branches of domestic policymaking, such as the legislative, executive, or judiciary (Kelley and Simmons 2015; Simmons 2009).

17. Xinyuan Dai (2005) claims that international monitoring provides credible information to pro-compliance constituencies, which they can use to hold their governments accountable. Echoing this logic, Daniela Donno (2013, 39–42) argues that IGO criticism of electoral misconduct encourages domestic protests by validating accusations of norm violations—providing the opposition with much needed credibility—and by reducing the likelihood of repression and retaliation. See also McEntire, Leiby, and Krain 2015.

18. Alter 2014; Merry 2006; Simmons 2009, 140–44.

19. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Simmons 2009.

20. Bob 2005; Carter 2016; Donno 2013; Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Simmons 2009.

21. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999.

In formulating these arguments, few of the earlier scholars claimed that international human rights pressure always or inevitably produces compliance. The pioneering works recognized that shaming produces results beyond commitment and internalization and may backfire by inciting counterreactions.[22] Nevertheless, compliance and conformity were the principal themes permeating the first wave of norms research. Against this backdrop, shaming was considered a powerful tool to punish violations and promote human rights.

RECOGNIZING NORM RESISTANCE AND BACKLASH

In many ways, it is unsurprising that the first wave of norms research foregrounded diffusion and compliance. In an intellectual environment dominated by materialist paradigms, simply establishing the causal importance of norms and shaming was an impressive feat. However, this literature quickly came under scrutiny for presenting an overly optimistic view of international shaming. By focusing too heavily on the successful promotion of "good" norms by "good" actors, such work downplayed the central role of politics on both the giving and receiving ends of norm enforcement, while muting the widespread realities of contestation, resistance, and backlash.

A newer wave of research has sought to correct these oversights, elaborating two key insights. First, human rights enforcement is ineluctably political: actors often shame one another in order to promote their own self-interests, not necessarily the universality of human rights. As Clifford Bob highlights, for example, rights are used as tools and instruments to advance strategic agendas, including illiberal agendas.[23] Likewise, work by Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Ayşe Zarakol, and Ann Towns converges on the idea that international norms and shaming constitute a form of social power, (re)producing social hierarchies by establishing relations of insider-outsider or superior-inferior.[24] Meanwhile, large-N empirical work demonstrates the politicized nature of norm enforcement: as with most processes in

22. Keck and Sikkink (1998), for example, highlighted cases where transnational advocacy campaigns around traditional gender practices, such as female genital cutting and foot-binding, backfired by provoking the resistance of local actors. Likewise, Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink recognized that international shaming can stimulate counterreactions from autocrats and right-wing social forces that view human rights as a threat to their power—what they call "blocking factors" (1999, 24, 260–62). They revised the "spiral model" in 2013 to expand on the dynamics of denial and resistance and the conditions in which they persist.

23. Bob 2019.

24. Adler-Nissen 2014; Towns 2009; Towns and Rumelili 2017; Zarakol 2014, 2017.

international relations, geopolitics plays a critical role in determining who gets shamed for norm violations and why.[25] As a result, international condemnation is highly uneven and does not always follow the worst behavior.[26] For these reasons, many scholars view shaming as too inconsistent, too unreliable, and too cynical to have a meaningful impact on state behavior.[27]

Second, target countries are not passive objects of international shaming; they can and do resist in creative ways. States translate and adapt norms in order to better fit with local conditions;[28] contest and argue over their meaning;[29] deflect and evade accusations of abuse;[30] implement domestic institutions to immunize themselves from international influences;[31] and craft rhetorical arguments that justify their actions or minimize the perception of noncompliance.[32] While highlighting the agency of "norm takers," this body of work catalogs the myriad outcomes of international normative pressure beyond compliance or *status quo ante*.[33]

In addition to multiple flavors of resistance and contestation, some scholars recognize the potential for norm *backlash*: instances in which shaming not only fails to induce compliance but stimulates further offense, driving change in the opposite direction of the norm advocated.[34] Some posit that shaming one kind of violation can drive an increase in other violations, such as the use of government repression to offset improvements in political rights.[35] Others argue that shaming can provoke adverse reactions or countermobilization in the target state.[36] For example, research on norm "antipreneurs" and rival advocacy networks demonstrates that transnational advocacy can stimulate countermovements that often deploy tactics

25. Donno 2013; Lebovic and Voeten 2006; Zarpli and Zengin 2022.

26. Boockmann and Dreher 2011; Hafner-Burton and Ron 2013; Hill, Moore, and Mukherjee 2013; Hug and Lukács 2014; Lebovic and Voeten 2006; Murdie and Urpelainen 2015; Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007; Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers 2005.

27. Johns 2022, chap. 4.

28. Acharya 2004; Cloward 2016; Merry 2006.

29. Wiener 2004.

30. Búzás 2017, 2018; Hurd 2005; McKeown 2009.

31. Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017.

32. Cardenas 2006, 2011; Dixon 2017; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999, 2013; Schimmelfennig 2001. The concepts of "tactical concessions," "account making," and "rhetorical adaptations" have been introduced to describe this phenomenon.

33. Bob 2019; Dixon 2017; Hurd 2017; Schimmelfennig 2001.

34. Carothers 2006; Hopgood, Snyder, and Vinjamuri 2017; Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017, 3–4; Wachman 2001.

35. Hafner-Burton 2008. For further discussion of the "negative spillover" hypothesis and a comparison to other kinds of "backlash," see Strezhnev, Kelley, and Simmons 2021.

36. Hopgood, Snyder, and Vinjamuri 2017; Gruffydd-Jones 2018; Snyder 2020a.

and strategies similar to those of their pro-norm counterparts.[37] A number of experimental studies suggest that international normative pressure incites negative reactions in the domestic audience in the target country (see chapter 5 for a summary of experimental work on backlash and individual attitudes). Some stigmatized states may even choose to embrace their "deviant" status as a virtue, proudly flaunting their rejection and defiance of international norms.[38] Empirically, scholars have observed backlash to international normative pressure in several domains, including whaling,[39] sexuality rights,[40] and apologies for mass atrocities.[41]

OUTSTANDING PUZZLES

If the studies cited here usher in a "third wave" of norms research, this book is very much a part of that movement, building on the insights of this work about the political nature of norms and shaming.[42] It also tackles two outstanding puzzles. For one, existing research recognizes the potential for shaming to incite resistance or backlash but provides little explanation as to why actors would choose to shame despite these risks. Why do states engage in shaming in situations where such efforts are ineffective or counterproductive?

Second—and perhaps most crucially—why do some states redouble their commitment to violations in the face of external pressure while others choose to comply? We now have a better understanding of *how* states react to normative pressures but know less about *why* and *under what conditions* they do so. As Sonia Cardenas puts it in her comprehensive review, the central problem facing scholars is "the continued inability to account for why states sometimes resist international human rights norms, even when the conditions for compliance appear propitious."[43] When does shaming lead to an improvement in human rights conditions, and when does it backfire?

To be sure, many have tackled this question, but their answers typically point to attributes of the target state, such as its international power or

37. Ayoub 2014; Bloomfield and Scott 2016; Bob 2012; Chaudoin 2016; Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017; Sanders 2016; Symons and Altman 2015.

38. Adler-Nissen 2014; Evers 2017.

39. Bailey 2008; Epstein 2012.

40. Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017; Symons and Altman 2015.

41. Dixon 2018; Lind 2008.

42. Adler-Nissen 2016.

43. Cardenas 2004, 213.

status,[44] its domestic political institutions,[45] or its preexisting societal constituencies that support or oppose compliance.[46] These kinds of explanations fall into what social theorists call *substantialist* arguments.[47] A substantialist approach explains variation in norm dynamics by pointing to the substantive content, intrinsic interests, or fixed properties of a particular norm or actor. The vast majority of existing accounts about why shaming works or backfires—and IR in general—are substantialist in nature.[48]

For example, one popular explanation for why shaming backfires emphasizes the local cultural environment and "the degree to which the norms underpinning the stigma are shared."[49] Jack Snyder, for instance, argues that human rights shaming can backfire by igniting social-psychological processes that empower "traditional power structures" in the target group. This is especially likely to occur, he argues, when shaming is wielded by "*cultural outsiders*" (that is, liberal progressives) "in ways that appear to condemn local social practices."[50] In this view, backlash to international human rights shaming is ultimately rooted in autonomous cultural beliefs that are "illiberal," "retrograde," and implicitly non-Western—even as external shaming activates or energizes those beliefs. Here Snyder joins a host of other scholars in arguing that backlash emerges from a lack of compatibility between foreign and domestic norms.[51]

Snyder and I agree on shaming's potential to backfire, as well as on some of the psycho-sociological dynamics by which backlash unfolds. Where our arguments diverge is on root causes. Snyder takes the substantialist view, emphasizing intrinsic cultural factors, such as traditional norms, that supposedly conflict with liberal rights. My own argument, in contrast, is completely agnostic with regard to the *content* of norms—whether liberal, illiberal, compatible, or incompatible—and instead emphasizes the relational *context* in which norms are promoted or resisted. In my view, backlash is not unique to "traditional"

44. Adler-Nissen 2014; Evers 2017; Krasner 1993; Lebovic and Voeten 2006, 2009; Towns 2012; Towns and Rumelili 2017.

45. Checkel 1997, 2001; Davenport 1999; Gurowitz 1999; Moravcsik 2000; Poe and Tate 1994; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 2013; Sikkink 1993; Simmons 2009.

46. Ayoub 2014; Bloomfield and Scott 2016; Bob 2012; Búzás 2018; Cardenas 2011; Chaudoin 2016; Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017; Risse and Ropp 1999; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 2013; Sanders 2016; Symons and Altman 2015.

47. Jackson and Nexon 1999, 2019.

48. For critiques of substantialism in IR, see Adler-Nissen 2015; Jackson and Nexon 1999; McCourt 2016.

49. Adler-Nissen 2014, 154.

50. Snyder 2020a, 110.

51. Cloward 2016; Cortell and Davis 1996; Nuñez-Mietz and Garcia Iommi 2017.

or "illiberal" cultures. Indeed, it may even occur in "liberal" and "modern" (even Western!) societies, as well as among individuals who would otherwise support human rights. This is not to deny that substantive attributes like culture are important, only to say that they are indeterminate. I would suggest that responses to international shaming cannot be adequately explained in terms of attributes of norms or states alone and instead require attention to the social relations mediating their interaction. A story that begins and ends with attributes like culture tells only part of the story.

A Relational Approach to Shaming

This book offers a different way to think about international shaming and its influence on state behavior, one that I believe has several advantages over predominant substantialist approaches. I describe this approach as *relational* because it shifts our attention from the attributes of norms or states to the relations between them. This section elaborates this meta-theoretical framework. I first clarify two central concepts: norms and shaming. I then explain why a study of international shaming demands special attention to social relationships, what kinds of analyses such attention demands, and what insights it might yield.

NORMS AND SHAMING

I define norms as standards of appropriate behavior that are enforced through social sanctions and about which there is some degree of consensus. This formulation builds on the standard definition in IR while incorporating two additional components.[52] First, I foreground *social sanctions* as a constitutive element of norms. "Norms cannot be considered merely as a series of 'oughts,'" write Gary Goertz and Paul Diehl, "but the possibility of sanctions is also an essential component."[53] What distinguishes norms from other patterns of behavior or intersubjective beliefs is their enforcement through social rewards and punishments.[54] Thus, understanding the

52. The oft-used definition in IR is "standard[s] of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996, 5). Prescriptive norms differ from statistical norms by virtue of their moral dimension. As Ann Towns (2010, 45) explains, prescriptive norms "are essentially about *value*, as they validate certain kinds of behavior for specific sorts of actors and devalue other sorts of behavior."

53. Goertz and Diehl 1992, 638.

54. Other scholars who center social sanctions in their discussion of norms include Adler-Nissen 2014; Donno 2010; Horne 2009; Zarakol 2014.

social dynamics through which norms are enforced is key to understanding norms themselves.

Second, the phrase "to some degree of consensus" registers my departure from the notion that normative commitments are necessarily shared, adopted, or expected by all relevant actors.[55] Throughout the book, I try to avoid references to "global norms" in order to avoid casting human rights claims as universal ideals, even if particular actors might present them as such. For similar reasons, I avoid references to "the international community" except when quoting other speakers, a choice that reflects my disagreement with the term's implicit assumptions. In its usage as an actor, "the international community" signifies no actor at all, but rather a disembodied authority that has managed to transcend politics to arrive at a shared moral certitude. Not only does such a consensus not exist, but the notion blinds us to something I find much more interesting: the ways in which particular actors gesture toward or make use of "global norms" or the "international community" in order to serve particular ends.

Earlier, I defined international shaming as the public expression of disapproval of specific actors—typically governments—for perceived violations of appropriate conduct. Following a long tradition in the social sciences, I understand shaming as quintessentially an instance of *social sanctioning*. Generally speaking, social sanctions refer to informal methods of enforcing norms through social rewards (for approved behavior) and costs (for disapproved behavior). Shaming represents a form of negative sanctions by which other actors diffusely punish a norm violator through adverse reactions.[56] In the interpersonal realm, these reactions can take a variety of forms, from subtle ridicule and slights to social exile and severe material deprivation. While they range in severity, social costs share a similar logic: by attaching negative consequences to norm-violating behavior, shaming lowers the expected net benefit of defection and encourages compliance with expected conduct. This broad conceptualization has been used to examine public shaming in a wide range of contexts, from the historic public square to modern-day social media, from corporate boycotts to public health interventions.[57] Regardless of the specific technique, actor, or context, most observers converge on a similar intuition about what

55. As Susan Hyde (2011, 24) observes, "It is not necessary for all states to believe that the norm is legitimate in order for it to be enforced."

56. As Christine Horne (2009, 9) explains, "Informal sanctions are relative—treating people better or worse depending on how they behave."

57. Frye 2021; Jacquet 2016; Maibom 2010; Massaro 1997; Scheff 2000.

shaming is: an informal, diffuse attempt to enforce a norm by imposing social costs on the violator.

In international life, shaming likewise occurs through negative reactions to perceived violations of normative conduct, such as human rights abuses. Much of the time this reaction comes in the form of public criticism, although the criticism is occasionally supplemented with additional measures, such as economic sanctions, the withdrawal of foreign aid, or barring the target state from IOs. Much of this book focuses on rhetorical condemnation, owing to its ubiquity in the international human rights arena. However, the general framework can apply to *any* state-to-state enforcement, whether material, political, or ideational in nature. As I suggested earlier, rhetorical and material sanctions are highly intermingled: the former is almost always a precursor to the latter. Perhaps for this reason, early norms scholarship used a very broad notion of "international pressure" or "socialization" that included both shaming and other kinds of material leverage.[58] The key point is that all such penalties are implemented diffusely, through the discretionary actions and choices of individual states. And like their individual-level counterparts, they claim the same ostensible function, despite differences in severity or effectiveness. As George Downs puts it, "Any threatened action or combination of actions that the designers of an enforcement strategy believe will operate to offset the net benefit that a potential violator could gain from noncompliance qualifies as a punishment strategy."[59]

It is worth pausing here to underscore how these conceptualizations diverge from other, more common approaches in the literature. In the first place, my framework diverges from many of those that theorize shaming as a "socializing" influence instructing states on appropriate conduct. On my view, normative demands do not necessarily represent the principles of any "international community" (or, as we will see, even the shamer itself). Condemnation is the result of specific political relationships, not a reflection of discordance with the international community writ large. Nor should we assume that most states strive for membership in a supposed "civilized community" or necessarily depend on a positive image within this group for their status or esteem.

Relatedly, mine is not a persuasive approach to shaming but a coercive one. The former involves changing hearts and minds through noncoercive

58. For example: "In the context of international politics, socialization involves diplomatic praise or censure, either bilateral or multilateral, which is reinforced by material sanctions and incentives" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 902). Similar usage can be found in Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999, 2013).

59. Downs 1998.

deliberation; the latter hinges on social inducements to elicit desired behavior.[60] Nothing about shaming requires the target to internalize a norm.[61] Indeed, individuals who move between cultures are often shamed for things they never considered unacceptable, and yet they change their behavior to fit in nonetheless.[62] Likewise, states, and the individuals who constitute them, need not share the norms of the stigmatizer in order to be responsive to social sanctions. Rather, because actors depend on the judgment of others for things they care about, they behave strategically to shape that judgment regardless of whether they genuinely believe what they are doing is right or wrong.[63]

Moreover, *shaming* does not require *shame*, a word that denotes a painful, internal emotion experienced by individuals.[64] "Shaming" is a form of external pressure imposed by others that may or may not generate feelings of shame in the target.[65] In other areas of the social sciences, the general consensus is that shame (the feeling) is tangential to shaming (the penalty). When it comes to shaming, as Raffaele Rodogno puts it, "it is sufficient that [observers] understand that disapproval is being conveyed to the offender."[66] Likewise, since I remain agnostic about the extent to which international actors *feel* shame, I focus instead on external social inducements generated by an expression of disapproval.[67] Again, this move is tenable because actors need not experience guilt, shame, or any other emotion in order to feel the costs of social sanctions, which operate primarily through the instrumental logic of costs and benefits.

60. Checkel 2001; Johnston 2001.

61. Schimmelfennig 2000, 2001.

62. Heidi Maibom gives the example of students from traditional working-class areas who go to prestigious universities, where they are shamed for their provincial accents and subsequently lose their accents (2010).

63. The desire for outward conformity, rather than internal drives, is what leads to decoupling policies from practices. For a discussion on decoupling and international human rights, see Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005.

64. While I focus primarily on shaming (the sanction) over shame (the feeling), it is worth noting the social character of the latter as well. George Cooley considered shame and pride the primary "social self-feelings" (Cooley 1992). Shame is often associated with other emotions such as embarrassment, rejection, and humiliation, but as Thomas Scheff (2000, 96–97) points out, what all these terms have in common is that they involve a threat to one's social identity and the social bond. As Maibom (2010, 576) puts it, shame is "essentially about our lives with others, about our identity in a group, and our standing within it."

65. Braithwaite 1989, 100.

66. Rodogno 2009, 447. See also Kahan 1996, 636.

67. For an extended discussion on shame (the emotion) in human rights shaming, see Ilgit and Prakash 2019.

Finally, despite its reputation in some circles as a "weapon of the weak," shaming is not exclusive to those lacking in material power.[68] Nor is shaming always directed toward hypocrisy, meant to expose the discrepancy between stated commitments and actual deeds.[69] It could be the case that shaming is more *effective* when it is wielded by the weak, or if it addresses hypocrisy, but these conditions are not necessary for shaming to take place. As it happens, in the theory I present, these two aspects of shaming play a negligible role in the causes and consequences of human rights enforcement.

Some readers may object to my conceptualization of international shaming as overly capacious. Can we really speak about formal denunciations, informal criticism, and rhetorical threats as manifestations of the same phenomenon? After all, the IR literature features numerous terms for specific behaviors that I lump together under the umbrella category of "shaming." Indeed, it is important to acknowledge the nuances distinguishing these activities, which may provide useful analytic leverage in some studies. It is equally important, however, to recognize what they share: all of these activities are discretionary attempts by one state to denounce another state for perceived violations of human rights norms.

A capacious definition of shaming enables us to see the theoretical commonalities joining seemingly distinct phenomena in world politics, as well as the commonalities between shaming among states and among individuals. Indeed, shaming draws broad interest from across the social sciences: from sociology and economics to criminology and law, all rely on a similar set of conceptual tools to build cumulative theories, despite the tremendous differences across their substantive domains. Using a broad, abstract conceptualization enables us to bring the study of international shaming in line with the study of shaming in the social sciences more broadly and to harness theoretical insights from other fields. Put differently, what we lose in theoretical precision is compensated with theoretical power.

THE SOCIAL IN "SOCIAL SANCTIONS"

To begin to construct a theory about international shaming, we need to dig a little deeper into what shaming really is and how it works at its most basic level. For many writers, what makes shaming distinctive is its ineluctably *social* character—how it operates in and through relationships. Relationships mediate the process in two ways.

68. Cf. Jacquet 2016.
69. Cf. Busby and Greenhill 2015.

First, shaming penalties are imposed "horizontally" through interactions between actors in a group or network, as opposed to "from above" by some centralized authority.[70] Unlike formal or institutionalized enforcement mechanisms, shaming manifests through the voluntary reactions of other actors in a group. Critically, this makes shaming as much about the shamer's behavior as it is about the target's. The clearest formulation of this point can be found in classical works on the sociology of stigma and deviance, which relied on a relational ontology.[71] People do not *have* stigma per se; rather, they are *stigmatized* by others. As the sociologist Howard Becker puts it:

> Deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.[72]

In other words, what is considered a violation of social norms does not follow naturally from individual behavior or attributes but instead reflects a social process by which others interpret, name, and punish certain acts as violations. The actual characteristics of "deviant" behavior are quite arbitrary and can vary considerably across different cultures and contexts. It is always up to others to determine which acts, and which actors, are labeled deviant. For this reason, readers should consider my use of the terms "violation" and "abuse" in this book as shorthand for "*what is considered to be* violation or abuse."

This insight is particularly salient for world politics. Despite a multitude of human rights institutions and mechanisms, the international environment contains no supranational authority to pass laws, monitor compliance, or punish violations in a way that achieves broad legitimacy.[73] To the extent that it happens at all, human rights enforcement *always* occurs diffusely, through the voluntary reactions of other stakeholders—especially states. Countries may work in concert to punish violations—as in multilateral action—but each polity must ultimately decide for itself if and how it wants to address

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70. Although shaming is imposed horizontally, I do not presume substantive equality between the relevant actors. Indeed, shaming often involves unequal power relationships and dependencies—a theme throughout the book.

71. For reviews on the sociology of deviance, see Downes, Rock, and McLaughlin 2016; Goode and Ritzer 2007.

72. Becker 2008, 9.

73. This does not mean that international institutions such as courts or treaties command *no* legitimacy or exert *no* independent effect on state behavior. See Alter 2014.

alleged human rights violations. Moreover, unlike the domestic communities studied by Becker and others, the international context is populated by states that frequently diverge in their interpretation of what constitutes norms or deviance. As I detail in the next chapter, the decision to punish human rights violations abroad is a deeply political one, and different states make different decisions on how to proceed.

Second, shaming aims to secure compliance by imposing *social costs*. Unlike other kinds of penalties that deprive the transgressor of material assets (fines, for example) or liberty (such as imprisonment), social costs leverage relationships and relational goods to punish violators.[74] As Dan Kahan and Eric Posner explain, the punitive element in shaming arises from the damage to the target's reputation, which "injures the victim not because reputation is intrinsically valuable" but because it "prevent[s] him from obtaining future gains" through cooperation with others.[75] Shaming imposes a "stigmatizing judgment" that, when successful, alienates the offender both directly— between shamer and target—and indirectly by potentially influencing the reactions of observers.[76] When third-party observers compound the stigmatizing judgment, shaming further degrades the target's overall reputation, resulting in widespread and diffuse social costs. To reiterate, stigmatization can still play a role even when the target fails to share the norms of the stigmatizer or to acknowledge any wrongdoing. To the extent that people rely on others for the things they care about, the costs associated with a degraded reputation clearly have material consequences beyond psychological injury.

In world politics, interstate shaming likewise works by leveraging relationships. Despite its reputation in some circles as "cheap talk," shaming is rarely *just* rhetorical. International expressions of disapproval are meaningful insofar as they threaten underlying geopolitical relationships and the benefits they enable. As I explain in the next chapter, these benefits can be ideational, political, or economic in nature. By shaming other governments, states leverage these relational goods in an attempt to coerce target governments. To clarify, not every instance of public criticism is *successful* in this attempt. For this reason, my use of the term "shaming" can perhaps be more accurately understood as "an attempt at shaming."

74. On an interpersonal level, relational goods are those that "either distinctively exist within interpersonal relationships or are themselves constitutive of such relationships" (Cordelli 2015, 86). Chapter 2 provides a fuller discussion of relational goods in the international sphere.

75. Kahan and Posner 1999, 370.

76. Adkins 2019. Some make a distinction between stigmatizing and reintegrative shaming; see, for example, Braithwaite 1989 and Koschut 2022.

ANALYTIC IMPLICATIONS

The fact that shaming occurs in and through relationships has important analytic implications. To paraphrase Erving Goffman, the very nature of shaming requires a language of relationships, not attributes.[77] In placing relationships at the center of my analysis, I am indebted to work in relational sociology (especially that of Christine Horne), as I emphasize relational ties in the process of norm enforcement among individuals, while also building on a diverse body of scholarship constituting the "relational turn" in international relations.[78] "Relationalism" refers to a family of social theories with roots in practice theory, pragmatic philosophy, social-network analysis, and actor-network theory, among other intellectual strands.[79] The diversity and nuances of this tradition notwithstanding, my use of the term mainly reflects Patrick Jackson and Daniel Nexon's understanding of relationalism as "a broad sensibility that emphasizes concrete connections and ties rather than individual characteristics of entities or the general categories to which those entities belong."[80]

When it comes to theory building, this sensibility manifests in three concrete ways. First and foremost, a relational approach requires that we foreground the *relational ties* that mediate norm enforcement.[81] These relationships exist prior to and beyond the normative sphere and are embedded

77. Goffman 2009, 3.

78. Horne 2001, 2004, 2007, 2009; Goodliffe et al. 2012. In addition to extending Horne's approach to the international sphere, this book extends her insights in three ways. First, while Horne centers cooperative relationships, I examine norm dynamics in the context of both relational affinity and antagonism, as international relationships are characterized by conflict and enmity as much as by cooperation and trust. Second, I expand the scope from intrasociety to intersociety encounters. States are societies unto themselves, and the interaction between domestic and international politics is an important component of international shaming. Finally, while existing sociological work focuses on the determinants of norm enforcement, I attend to both causes and consequences, examining various outcomes.

79. McCourt 2016; see also Adler-Nissen 2015; Jackson and Nexon 1999, 2019; Pratt 2016, 2019. For an example of a relational approach applied to international status, see Duque 2018.

80. Jackson and Nexon 2019, 2. In addition to a class of explanations, relationalism is sometimes understood as an ontology: relations generate other phenomena like states, which rely on social interactions for their existence (see previous note). Although I use relationalism mainly as a meta-theoretical framework directing explanatory emphasis, nothing in this account is incompatible with a relational ontology as such.

81. Other studies that emphasize the relationship between shamer and target include Esarey and DeMeritt 2017; Flockhart 2006; Goodliffe et al. 2012; Johnston 2001; Schimmelfennig 2000. Although valuable, most of these contributions focus only on the target's behavior, and so a fully fledged relational account of international shaming (addressing both the causes and consequences) remains outside their scope.

in political, economic, historical, and strategic entanglements. The main analytic wager of a relational approach is that much of what we find interesting about international shaming—including its causes and consequences—inheres in these relationships and not just in the autonomous attributes of the parties to those relationships. Changes in the nature and strength of these relationships are likely to change both norm enforcement and compliance decisions.

Second, a relational approach demands attention to both the social and *strategic* nature of shaming. As I alluded to earlier, this strategic element differentiates social sanctions from other mechanisms associated with norms, such as persuasion or learning. At the same time, social sanctions are grounded in *intersubjective* beliefs about appropriate behavior that define normative expectations.[82] In this sense, shaming involves a "logic of appropriateness" as well as a "logic of expected consequences," hinging on sincere ideological beliefs along with strategic behavior that leverages those beliefs to maximize utility.[83] We must presume, as Ian Hurd puts it, that "strategic actors [are] embedded in a socially constructed environment."[84]

Finally, a relational approach centers processes and interactions rather than outcomes. In their reflection on processual relationalism, Jackson and Nexon describe processes as "a causally or functionally linked set of occurrences or events" that take place "in an identifiable temporal series" to produce change.[85] A process approach foregrounds the dialogical nature of social sanctioning: shamers and targets respond to one another, and those responses, in turn, shape their future actions. Importantly, this observation requires that we analyze the causes and consequences of norm enforcement together as a coherent system. Most of the existing empirical work on shaming directs the analytic focus on just one step in this interaction. That is, one stream of research examines shaming as a dependent variable by asking what determines the human rights agenda, which countries are singled out for the global spotlight, and how transnational advocacy networks set their strategic priorities.[86] Another group looks into shaming as an independent

82. Johnston 2001, 501–2.
83. Olsen and March 1989.
84. Hurd 2005, 497.
85. Jackson and Nexon 1999, quoting Rescher 1996, 36.
86. Barry et al. 2014; Bob 2005; Carpenter 2007b, 2011; Cole 2010; Hafner-Burton and Ron 2013; Hendrix and Wong 2014; Hertel 2006; Hill, Moore, and Mukherjee 2013; Lebovic and Voeten 2006; Meernik et al. 2012; Murdie 2013; Ovsiovitch 1993; Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007; Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers 2005; Terman 2017.

variable, asking what impact, if any, it has on state behavior or other outcomes of interest.[87] These literatures rarely speak explicitly to each other or investigate how the first process informs the second. This book takes a more holistic and dialectical approach, viewing shamer and target in tandem as they interact and influence one another.

These three premises form the analytic bedrock for my substantive theory of international shaming. The next two chapters develop this theory in more detail, showing how the strategic interaction between shamer and target guides both the decision to shame human rights violations and the response. Chapter 2 focuses on the decision-making of the shamer, while Chapter 3 turns to the target. The discussion culminates in a set of predictions about states' reactions to international shaming—including compliance, defiance, and deflection—and when we usually witness these reactions.

Empirical Strategy and Findings

A relational approach raises some thorny methodological challenges. Foremost, because the theory generates observable implications pertaining to different outcomes (the onset and consequences of shaming), the actors (shamer, target, audience), and levels of analysis (international, domestic), testing the entire theory using a single data set or analysis is infeasible. And yet these implications, while analytically distinct, are closely related both theoretically and empirically. Indeed, as I emphasize throughout the book, the same dynamics that give rise to strong shaming efforts are also the ones that incentivize resistance to those efforts.

My empirical approach employs analytic tools aimed at disentangling messy causal relations while respecting the relational and processual nature of international shaming. This involves selecting critical components of the theory and examining them individually, using the appropriate data and methods. Chapter 4 focuses on the *interstate* aspects of my argument, examining the influence of strategic relations on shaming between states. Chapter 5 then concentrates on the *domestic* level, examining how international shaming alters public opinion and political dynamics within target states. Both chapters use quantitative methods—large-N and experimental, respectively—to test specific empirical implications derived from my

87. Ausderan 2014; Cole 2012; DeMeritt 2012; Hafner-Burton 2008; Krain 2012; Lebovic and Voeten 2009; Murdie and Davis 2012b; Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Murdie and Peksen 2013, 2014, 2015; Myrick and Weinstein 2021; Tingley and Tomz 2022. See also the literature cited in chapter 5.

theory. Then, in chapter 6, I bring these individual components together using two case studies drawn from real-life episodes of international shaming. In addition to filling in some of the gaps linking the claims tested in the previous two chapters, the case studies illustrate how they fit together to form a cohesive framework that helps to explain human rights enforcement as it occurs in practice.

Chapter 4 provides evidence for the parts of my theory pertaining to interactions between states using data from the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the most elaborate multilateral human rights process in the international system. The UPR is a process conducted by the UN Human Rights Council wherein states "peer-review" one another's human rights records. The forum provides an ideal laboratory to examine interstate shaming for several reasons. For one, by reviewing all 193 UN members, it is the only international human rights mechanism to achieve 100 percent voluntary participation. Further, the fact that the reviewers are the states themselves enables researchers to trace the influence of political relationships in the enforcement of human rights. Importantly, the UPR represents a highly systematic, formalized, and repetitive environment and thus is able to provide a granularity of information (who says what to whom) that is unmatched by other data sources.

I examined over fifty-seven thousand recommendations from the first two cycles of UPR, testing the influence of three kinds of strategic relationships: geopolitical affinity, formal military alliance, and arms trade. Results from the statistical analysis reveal the deep and extensive role of strategic relationships in the shaming process. States condemn norm violations selectively, sparing their strategic partners in the review process. Meanwhile, they condemn geopolitical rivals in more demanding and inflammatory fashion, all else equal. I also show that the target state's sensitivity to normative pressure is conditional on its relationship to the source of that pressure. That is, states will accommodate or reject shaming based on their relationship with the shamer, regardless of the norm in question or the substantive content of the criticism.

In chapter 5, I look at the ways in which international shaming alters domestic politics, using survey experiments that examine public reactions to foreign shaming. Contrary to some received wisdom, I find that international shaming exerts counterproductive effects on public opinion, increasing both nationalist sentiments and hostility toward advocacy efforts. Importantly, these defensive reactions appear to be relational, not ideological, in nature. Identical criticism can evoke very different reactions depending on the

source and target. Indeed, the evidence shows that foreign shaming can incite defensive reactions even among those individuals who are sympathetic to human rights causes. This suggests that antagonism toward international shaming is not reducible to preestablished ideological positions opposing human rights and hinges critically on relational context.

The main empirical advantage of both survey experiments and formal processes like the UPR lies in their ability to isolate causal factors in a highly controlled and stylized environment. But to understand how these mechanisms unfold in real life, we need detailed qualitative evidence culled from natural settings. To this end, Chapter 6 applies my relational framework of international shaming to two case studies. I first examine the US position toward Saudi Arabia following the death of *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. The second case turns to Iran and the 2010–2011 "Save Sakineh" campaign, an international shaming operation concerning a woman who was sentenced to death by stoning for adultery. In each case, I examine both the choice to shame human rights violations and the consequences of that choice, reconstructing the strategic interaction between (potential) shamers, target countries, and relevant audiences. Together, the cases illustrate the mechanisms underlying interstate human rights shaming and its variegated effects.

Scope, Limitations, and Disclaimers

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify what this book is not. For one, it does not provide an exhaustive analysis of human rights shaming or enforcement. International human rights enforcement is a complex phenomenon that involves a cast of state and nonstate characters, formal and informal institutions, and a range of processes occurring on multiple levels of analysis, from interpersonal to international. Clearly it is not possible to do justice to all of these facets, nor do I pretend to.

Rather, as discussed earlier, this book centers states and their role as shaming actors. It is important to keep in mind that states have a distinct set of strategic interests and capabilities that make them qualitatively different from NGOs and other nonstate actors. That said, the insights emerging from this study are not uniquely relevant to states. We know that NGOs and civil society play an important role in human rights enforcement. But to do so, they must navigate the ineluctably state-centric nature of the international environment. Put differently, the strategic interaction between states inevitably shapes the work of NGOs and vice versa. Therefore, although the

activities of nonstate actors lie outside my immediate focus, a study of inter-state shaming yields important implications for nonstate actors as well. In the concluding chapter, I highlight these implications by attending to other kinds of shamers—including NGOs, activists, and media outlets—and the interaction between them.

Importantly, this book does not offer a normative judgment of shaming as a political device. The history of human rights has demonstrated the power of moral criticism to mobilize political movements, articulate claims to equality and dignity, and even tame the most egregious abuses of power. These are undeniable feats. Beyond its utility as a political device, human rights shaming may thwart instrumentalist logic altogether, reflecting a deontological imperative to bear witness and speak up in the face of injustice.

While we should acknowledge the good that human rights pressure has done to uplift the human condition, it is equally important to recognize that shaming exerts myriad effects that may or may not align with the noble intentions of advocates. As a social process, it entails actions and reactions that may alter the political environment in ways that are unforeseen and often unintended by the agents involved. An empirical inquiry into this process should not be confused with a rejection or condemnation of international shaming or human rights ideals. To the extent that the arguments herein have normative implications, they urge a richer empirical investigation into the consequences of human rights enforcement—both intended and unin-tended—as a requirement of any responsible policy or action.

I provide additional information on the empirical analyses conducted in chapters 4 and 5 in online appendixes, which can be accessed at www .rochelleterman.com.

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