

variate regression models to evaluate rival (and complementary) theories on the roots of authoritarian populism. They use the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to ‘identify the ideological location of each country’s political parties’ (p. 229) and use this to create a continuous variable to score parties and to identify the cultural and economic origins of support for authoritarian and populist parties. The results of this analysis support their cultural backlash thesis: ‘voting for authoritarian parties is strongest among the older generation, men, the less educated, white European populations, in semi-rural areas, and among the most religious’ (p. 280), whereas ‘it is the younger cohorts who are consistently drawn toward parties that are more populist’ (p. 282). Furthermore, their analysis of political regimes and the influence of authoritarian and populist parties supports the notion that such parties can shape the behaviour of mainstream parties.

Cultural backlash contributes significantly to our understanding of the origins of the ‘authoritarian reflex’, its effects on individual voter behaviour and on electoral politics in western societies. Norris and Inglehart contend that the combination of populist rhetoric and authoritarian values can ‘generate a combustible mix that challenges the legitimate authority of institutions checking executive power, opening the door for rule by strongman leaders, social intolerance, and illiberal governance’ (p. 461).

What does this mean for foreign policy in western societies affected by authoritarian populist politics? Norris and Inglehart describe a ‘contagion of the right’ (p. 460) in which centre-right parties move towards authoritarian–populist party positions on contentious issues like immigration and European integration. Is such a contagion likely to affect foreign policy as well? For instance, the authors suggest that ‘regimes based on authoritarian cultures maintain control by restricting individual rights, silencing the free press, limiting opposition, and strengthening the army and police’ (p. 444). The Trump administration appears to be counting on authoritarian–populists in Europe doing the latter, in particular. Is that a good bet, or will authoritarian–populist rhetoric prove to be a ‘façade’ in the area of security and defence, as Norris and Inglehart argue it has been in other areas (p. 452)?

Cultural backlash does not answer such questions for scholars of international affairs. It does, however, offer important suggestions on how we might begin to do so ourselves.

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The views expressed above are his alone, and do not reflect US Army, Department of Defense or government policy.

Rising titans, falling giants: how Great Powers exploit power shifts. By Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press. 2018. 276pp. £37.00. ISBN 978 1 50172 505 0. Available as e-book.

Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson’s important book on Great Powers is a valuable contribution to research on the behaviour of the world’s most important actors. Shifrinson has written an eminently readable book. His theory is elegant, his case-studies are well argued and his analysis is both clear and nimble. Most important, however, he is setting new standards for qualitative research. Gone are the quickly written empirical chapters of yesteryear—relying solely on one’s favourite historian. In contrast, to build his two case-studies, the author collected thousands of primary sources and conducted dozens of interviews which he carefully analyses to test his predictions. However, like all scholarly work, this one also has its limitations. Shifrinson succeeds in showing that American leaders behaved as his theory expected them to do: he persuades readers that Great Powers do tend to take advan-

tage of others when they just can. And yet the book makes no effort to investigate whether Washington acted pursuant to the theory's fundamental rationales: Shiffrinson does not strive to find out whether American officials acted to maximize power in pursuit of security or for other reasons.

Shiffrinson's theory builds on offensive realism. In anarchy, states will want to maximize power in order to ensure security. Consequently, all will strive to become the sole Great Power—the hegemon. Over time, some will rise while others decline. Rising states will have two preferences: first, to use decliners against others; and second, to prey on them. Hence, when there are other Great Powers around and, therefore, the declining state could be of assistance, the rising actor will have an incentive to support it. In contrast, when no other Great Powers are present, the declining state is useless and the rising power will want to become predatory. Both support and predation have to be pursued carefully, Shiffrinson acknowledges. Thus, the strength or weakness of the declining power is relevant. On the one hand, when it is useful but strong, the rising power will fear that too much support could further strengthen a potential enemy and will only provide limited assistance. In contrast, when the declining power is useful but weak, it cannot pose a threat, so more ambitious strengthening will be warranted. When the declining power is useless but strong, the rising power will position itself to compete over the long haul but will not immediately go for the jugular. Conversely, when it is both useless and weak, the rising power will take full advantage of it.

Empirically, Shiffrinson argues that both at the beginning and at the end of the Cold War, American strategic behaviour is better accounted for by his theory than by a number of competitors. He provides strong evidence that frameworks emphasizing security dilemmas, economic interdependences, domestic ideologies or leaders' ideas are less powerful when it comes to predicting Washington's actions. During the late 1940s, Washington sought to employ London's waning power to curtail Moscow's freedom of action. Thus, when it had to choose between preying on a weakening United Kingdom or supporting it in order to create a common front against the Soviet Union, the United States chose the latter. Strategic considerations—not economics, democracy, individuals or the shared historical background—played the decisive role. During the late 1980s, two consecutive US administrations sought to take advantage of Soviet weakness in order to push this inimical actor off the world stage for ever. As Soviet power waned, American strategy became increasingly predatory, seeking to undercut Moscow's position in Europe and create a new continental architecture. Ultimately, the book convinces that Washington's approach to Moscow was anything but benign.

Readers, however, are left wondering why Shiffrinson only seeks to provide evidence for some of his theory's empirical implications. His (stated) intention is to trace the causal logic of his theory, to show at work the sequence of rationales, choices and occurrences expected by his mechanism. However, while he carefully articulates the strengthening, bolstering, weakening or predatory nature of US behaviour, he does not investigate US leaders' central rationales. Was Washington's approach to London and Moscow meant to maximize power for security reasons? Or were US leaders intending, for instance, to protect democracy, strengthen capitalism and bolster prosperity? Shiffrinson's model is congruent with any—or all—of these logics. Therefore, it remains unclear what is ultimately necessary for producing the observed outcome. Two counterfactuals illustrate this conundrum. Had the United Kingdom become a communist state in the late 1940s—abandoning its global political, economic and security links, and seeking to export its ideology—would the Americans still have supported the British? Conversely, had the Soviet Union quickly managed to

transform itself into a prosperous capitalist democracy at the end of the 1980s—shedding its adversarial ideology and bringing a valuable contribution to the quickly globalizing world economy—would Washington still have been ruthless towards Moscow? Shiffrinson's book tells us nothing that could help us answer these questions. Thus, while Shiffrinson has made an important step towards understanding the behaviour of Great Powers in the current era, others will have to build on his work to better illuminate the rationales underpinning these states' actions.

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Human rights futures. Edited by Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2017. 344pp. Index. £22.99. ISBN 978 1 31664 416 4. Available as e-book.

Human rights futures is an outstanding edited volume which features high-quality contributions of originality and consequence from a range of scholars of human rights. As a collection it is unparalleled in its breadth and depth, diversity of perspectives and analytical rigour and merits being widely read by scholars and advanced students of human rights and International Relations.

To their credit, contributors with substantial disagreements about human rights engage with one another respectfully even when they differ—sometimes vociferously—about the efficacy and integrity of, and prospects for, human rights. This range of perspectives gives the book so much of its richness.

The editors note that, on one hand, many of the contributors believe that human rights continue to galvanize positive legal and social change and advance freedoms and justice globally. On the other hand, 'alternative accounts to the mobilization narrative see a future that is much more one of ambivalence, ineffectiveness, failure, and even irrelevance' (p. 2). Thematically and conceptually, they divide the book into four sections: scope conditions, which examine the supporting factors needed to advance human rights; backlash from those who defy the values and aims of human rights; localization, where universal human rights are particularized and practised locally and translated culturally and socially; and utopias and endtimes, which questions the viability of human rights and critiques its prospects.

Each chapter addresses key issues within the field of human rights, often with startling originality. Some contributors, like Stephen Hopgood and Sam Moyn, are deeply sceptical of the efficacy of human rights and convincingly argue in defence of their scepticism. Others, like Geoff Dancy and Kathryn Sikkink, Jack Snyder, Shareen Hertel, and Beth Simmons and Anton Strezhnev offer evidence and reasoning to defend the efficacy of human rights. They show how they are advanced through a variety of campaigns and forms of political, legal, social, civic and media mobilization, with mixed, but sometimes moderately successful, results. However, they also acknowledge that there is a large gap between the promise of human rights and actual outcomes.

Other contributors offer commentaries and analysis on a range of human rights issues, including how universalist human rights, often promoted by global NGOs and international institutions, become locally owned, described and practised. Sally Engle Merry and Peggy Levitt address this issue, while Elizabeth Shackman Hurd raises important and troubling questions about how human rights can become unexpectedly politicized and co-opted. They can become exclusionary and reify and essentialize particular identities and religious, political and social power structures. Alexander Cooley and Matthew Schaaf address the