

Nuclear Weapons and the Pursuit of Prestige

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Abstract: Prestige is defined as a group's sharing a certain second-level belief: each member believes that the rest believe that a party has a certain desirable quality. Their beliefs must also give the party influence in the group. It is important even within a strategic approach to international relations since states may use it to judge quality or they may bandwagon, choosing who to support depending on what they expect others to do. A survey of the word in historical books and articles supports the definition and identifies typical sources of prestige. The definition explains why building nuclear weapons is an especially effective vehicle for prestige, and shows what can be done to link it to societal development instead of armaments. A game model of prestige-seeking has one obvious equilibrium where nuclear weapons enhance one's prestige for technical prowess, and another surprising one where that can lower prestige. The world community can take certain actions to promote the safer regime.

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1. Introduction

In the siege warfare of medieval times, a central weapon was the artillery bombard, a wide-mouthed cannon used to fire stones against a castle's walls. During the 1400's some European powers wanted a bombard of awe-inspiring size. France had the *Dule Grillet* and Scotland the *Mons Meg*, which could hurl a 330-pound ball for two miles. They were impressive but impractical -- bulky and vulnerable to being captured in a retreat (Smith and Brown, 1989.) A century later, large sea powers insisted on a warship displacing over 1000 tons: Scotland built the *Great Michael*, England the *Harry Grace Dieu*, France the *Grand Francis*, Sweden had the *Elefant*, and Portugal the *São João*. "[P]restige insisted on size," the military historian J.R. Hale commented (1975, 504), adding that the money would have been better spent on several smaller ships.

Prestige is seen as a reason that European states sought colonies, that France declared war on Prussia in 1870 (Howard, 1948) and that Mussolini invaded Ethiopia (Mori, 1978). Internal American documents used it to justify pressing on in Korea and Vietnam (e.g., Kim, 1996; Milliken, 1996), and members of the U.S. Congress have cited it for and against intervening in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Some countries have sought prestige through nuclear weapons. To Charles de Gaulle, the issue of a French bomb was not just military strategy but "Will France remain France?" (Kohl, 1971, quoted by Sagan, 1996/1997). According to Mao, China built its bomb in part for international status (Johnston, 1995/1996). Walsh (1997) documented Australia's little-known nuclear quest during the 1960s, and saw the military's motive as standing proud beside their colleagues in the United States and Britain. According to many analysts, Saddam Hussein's

program is aimed at gaining the prestige to make him a regional leader, and Iran's activities have a corresponding motive (Schindler, 2000.) Indian leaders expected that their first explosion in 1974 would enhance their country's prestige (Chandrasekhara Rao, 1974, quoted by Treverton, 2000), and many predicted more benefits from the 1998 tests. Prestige is not the only motive for these weapons, of course, and in some cases of proliferation it may be absent, but it led India to acquire them even though the net consequence seems to have been a decrease in security.

With national leaders and historians insisting that prestige matters, one would expect to find it well dissected in the international relations literature, or there should at least be an explanation for its absence. Hans Morgenthau and others raised it in the 1940s and 1950s,¹ and a few recent authors have seen it as a missing element in international relations theory² or treated related concepts like status or reputation.³ Within the whole security literature, however, the treatment of prestige is sparse.

For Morgenthau, prestige was a central explanation in international politics. It was ignored, he thought, because it had become linked to an outmoded, pompous style of diplomacy.

¹ Some examples were Nicholson (1937), Morgenthau (1948), Herz (1951), Niebuhr (1959), McGinn (1972) and Gilpin (1981), who asserted its importance: "prestige, rather than power, is the everyday currency of international relations, much as authority is the central ordering principle of domestic society," but did not go into detail.

² For example, Kim (1996), Lavoy (1993, 1997), Thayer (1993), Ishibashi (1998), Sylvan, Graff and Pugliese (1998), Markey (1999, 2000) and O'Neill (1999a).

³ Examples are Luard (1986), Eyre and Suchman (1993), and Sagan (1996/1997).

Another reason may be the lack of a clear definition. Lavoy (1997, 71) notes that a nuclear program not explainable by security or technological motives often goes into the residual category of prestige. Applied so widely, the concept becomes theoretically useless.

The second section proposes a general definition of the word, and discusses the first of two subtypes. It involves prestige *for a specific desirable quality*: a party has prestige within a certain group if each member believes that the rest believe that the party has the quality. Further, this second-order belief must confer influence in the group. The quality underlying nuclear weapons might be technical prowess, or more broadly modernity, as a basis for full-fledged membership in the world system (Meyer, 1997).

The definition uses the framework of decision and game theory. Although prestige generally includes emotions and affective attitudes, it is more than that, and the paper shows why even writers who take a rationalist/strategic approach must consider it. The definition leads to game models relevant to questions like: Why is prestige strategically important? How do nations acquire it for themselves and how do they judge it in others? Why do some countries embrace the bomb as a prestige symbol rather than achievements in their social development, and what can be done to uncouple prestige from nuclear weapons?

To confer prestige more effectively, the event should be “publicly known” in a certain sense: it should be one whose occurrence makes it not only known, but known to be known, and so on. Acquiring nuclear weapons is the kind of event that is naturally publicly known – it is sharply bordered, sudden and attention-grabbing. The third section suggests ways to turn social or developmental progress into publicly known events and more effective bearers of prestige.

The fourth section discusses when building nuclear weapons is a good strategy to gain

prestige. There turn out to be two possible regimes, an obvious one where a country proves what it can do and gains prestige for its ability, and a more surprising one where a country that displays its ability loses prestige. The fact that the game has more than one equilibrium gives the onlookers a role in determining which one holds. A proliferating state's prestige is in the hands of the rest of the world community more than is usually thought, but the world has often adopted behaviors that encourage the acquisition of the weapons. The section discusses how the international system can be moved to the safer equilibrium. Popular metaphors around prestige treat it as a commodity held by its possessor, and reinforce the idea that all onlookers can do is try to physically prevent the spread of the technology. The game models help to correct the metaphor.

The fifth section discusses the second type, *generic prestige*, where the second-order belief is not in an objective trait but in the party's influence, and this belief contributes to that influence. Generic prestige is gained through precedents, such as the public deference of others or public inclusion in important activities, and through prestige symbols conferred by others.

The next two sections deal with issues that relate to both specific and generic prestige. The sixth section discusses the idea of prestige symbols, in particular, why they deserve the name symbols. The seventh section evaluates the adequacy of the two definitions and looks at sources of prestige other than nuclear weapons. Gleanings from historical works produced 249 attributed causes of prestige gain or loss. The survey shows that the two types are about equally prevalent, and that the definitions seem to fit the cases. This section also compares the proposed definitions with others, such as Morgenthau's characterization of prestige as "reputation for power," and differentiates it from related concepts like reputation, credibility, honor and status.

The conclusion summarizes the recommendation for reducing the drive for nuclear weapons motivated by prestige.

1. Specific prestige

States pursue prestige for a variety of traits such as democratic ideals or sports accomplishments, but when nuclear weapons are sought the traits are most often military power or modernity and national competence. A U.S. State Department memo on the consequences of a Chinese test (McGhee, 1961), feared that many Asians would raise their estimate of Chinese military power and would see the Communist method as a better way to organize the resources of developing states. Similarly, according to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, head of India's Department of Defense Research and Development, the 1998 tests showed that "India has got the size and weight to do it." Dr. R. Chidambaram, head of the Atomic Energy Commission, pointed out that the fissile material used in all five tests was completely indigenous (*Bangalore Deccan Herald*, May 18 1998.)

An adequate definition of specific prestige must involve both the particular reputation being sought and the reference group. Some writers have seen prestige as contradictory: since nuclear weapons both raise and lower it, it could not be a serious motive for national actions. The resolution is that prestige of the kind discussed here is conditional on the trait and on the group. One reaction to the India's nuclear tests was that a country with a rich culture did not need to seek prestige in that way, but India was seeking prestige for qualities like technical advancement, and its cultural tradition was of no help. During the 1960s Canada controversial

arrangements to place US nuclear weapons on its aircraft and missiles may have raised its prestige within the NATO military but lowered it among the non-aligned countries (O'Neill, 1999a). This was a dilemma but it was not a contradiction.

Prestige for a specific trait can be understood as involving a certain level of beliefs about others' beliefs. At the "zero'th" level of beliefs is the true situation, the objective fact about the desired quality, independent of what people think. At the next level there is "esteem" or "respect" or "reputation," where the members generally believe X has the desired trait.⁴ Prestige is located at the second level, as the reputation for having a certain reputation:

Party X has *specific prestige* for a trait in a group if

- (a) the group members generally believe that they believe that X has the trait;
- (b) they generally believe that they see the trait as desirable; and
- (c) on account of (a) and (b), X has influence in the group.

Consequences and adequacy of the definition

Some consequences of the definition clarify its meaning. The definition's implications should make sense within our natural ideas about prestige, and if they do they help to confirm its adequacy. First, to be non-trivial prestige⁵ requires two or more observers. That separates it from related concepts such as social face or a social norm. A pair of people interacting alone

⁴ No formal definition can reproduce the variations of a natural language. "Reputation" is often used for the concept defined here as "prestige," and the reverse occurs, as in the US Central Intelligence Agency's country-by-country survey of American prestige (1953).

⁵ This section will drop "specific," and use just "prestige."

could follow norms of equity, reciprocity or politeness, but it would be odd for one to tell the other at the end of a private interaction, “you just lost prestige with me.”

Second, one can have reputation without prestige or prestige without reputation. Everyone in the group may think you are talented, but if they do not realize that they all hold this opinion, you have reputation, without prestige. Conversely, students at a certain university might feel it is a poor place to be, but if everyone avoids saying this out loud they might continue to think that the rest think highly of it. The university will have prestige but not a good reputation. These kinds of divergences are not uncommon when there is pressure to suppress one’s true opinion, and they generate interesting consequences when the knowledge rises to the second level. Lohmann’s account (1992) of the swelling public demonstrations against the communist East German government can be interpreted as the regime’s low reputation among the populace finally pulling down its prestige as well, when the demonstrations made it clear to everyone just how unpopular the regime was.

Certain implications follow from condition (c), that prestige yield influence in the group. Someone can have a reputation for being happy and the group can be aware of that reputation, but we would still not say the person has prestige for happiness, since second-order beliefs about someone’s happiness do not give them influence. Also the prestige-holder must be able to form intentions and make decisions towards goals – these are prerequisites of having influence. A soldier who dies in war is said to gain glory but not prestige. Also, prestige cannot apply to objects -- the Grand Canyon may be grand, but it does not enjoy prestige because it cannot wield influence. Nations, however, can form intentions in the collective sense analyzed by some philosophers as “group intentions” or “we-intentions” (Tuomela, 1991, 1995).

A puzzle is that prestige is attributed to some kinds of inanimate objects. A neighborhood, an occupation like law or medicine, a university or an automobile is said to have prestige. Anthropologists speak of prestige gifts or prestige languages. However the context always involves an implicitly specified group of people, such as those living in the neighborhood or owning the automobile. The claim is really the indirect one that this group has prestige. A linguistic test to see that the object is only a bearer of prestige is that the car or neighborhood can be called “prestigious,” whereas it would be odd to apply those adjectives to a person.

Prestige must yield “influence,” according to the definition, and this is a better word than “power.” “Power” suggests intentionally getting one’s way and doing it over others’ resistance, but prestige situations often involve other’s voluntary action, perhaps even without one’s knowledge. Someone with prestige for rose-growing will have his opinions sought out and his techniques copied. The other rose-growers imitate him willingly, and so he has influence.

The idea that prestige confers influence seems uncontroversial, but an element to justify is the definition’s putting it at the second level of belief. For one, this agrees with the idea that prestige is a publicly recognized fact. People in the group are assumed to be mutually aware of one’s prestige. Also, it fits with the word’s origins. Before the nineteenth century “prestige” meant a trick or illusion (Schalk, 1971, Kjellmer, 1974), and putting it at the second level accords with this, since it locates it one more step away from the truth. Parties who have prestige without quality or even reputation, have it through an illusion of the crowd.⁶

⁶The new meaning with a positive connotation seems to have been taken from French. For a while during the nineteenth century English-speaking writers were faced with a word with both a

The definition is not aimed at uncovering what the word “really means” -- it is a proposal. Words in natural language are fuzzy and ambiguous and no precise account will reproduce all their senses. The criterion for a good definition is that it be clear, lead to productive models, and for the sake of communication that it more or less fit with an extant usage of the word.

When prestige matters

Holding prestige matters indirectly when others use it as an indicator for your reputation or quality, and it can also be valuable for its own sake. In the indirect case, observers who want to assess the subject’s quality may make a judgment about others’ opinions as an indirect indicator of this.⁷ The subject will then want a general belief among the observers that these opinions are high, that is, will want prestige. Why not look at quality directly? Perhaps the evidence is diffuse, with each observer having access to only a part of it, but prestige aggregates it since it is the opinions of many people about the views of many other people. Management schools, for example, differ from most other professional graduate programs in that it is harder to judge the quality of their output. Their graduates are less publicly visible – they do not publish books or articles, or write bar examinations that allow calculation of an average score, or try famous cases. In the last decade attention has turned to business school “rankings” published in positive and a negative connotation, and indicated the imported meaning by placing it in italics (Kjellmer, 1974).

⁷ The party whose quality is at issue will here be called the “subject” and the judges will be the “observers.”

various newsmagazines. The rankings are based largely on questions put to recruiters, alumni and executives (Fombrun, 1996) and indicate whether these parties believe the school is good. Since the readers of the rankings will act on this evidence, a management school wants the survey readers to believe the experts' belief in its quality. That is, it wants prestige. However, this is not the goal per se -- it is an instrument to raise the readers' first-order beliefs about the school.

Another reason for the subject wanting important parties to have a high opinion of others' opinions is that quality may be complex and multi-featured, leading people to refer to others' judgements. Students want to attend a prestigious university since their potential employers will look at the name of the alma mater. The employers cannot examine in detail the qualities and knowledge the students have acquired, so department chairs and deans are drawn to the "star" system, recruiting a professor whose move will be talked about in the field and beyond it. The university wants prestige among students, i.e., it wants them to believe that it holds a high reputation among employers.

To understand why prestige matters in these situations we can look others when it does not. It would be odd to say that someone "enjoys prestige" as a professional tennis player. It would be off the point. There is no need to consider others' opinions when we have a direct measure, when the record of winning gives the best evidence.

Prestige in itself can also be important to the subject, as when the observers' best actions towards the prestige-holder depend on each others' choices. A university with prestige will attract professors who expect their papers to be read more widely. Those in their discipline will want to read the same papers as others are reading, to stay current with discussions. In the

phenomenon of bandwagoning in alliance formation, the more states that are expected to support one side, the more likely it becomes that further states will join (Walt, 1987). Those choosing a side will ask themselves: Do others believe that state A is more powerful? If each answers yes, state A may gain allies because of this second-order belief, even if there is wide private recognition that it is the less powerful side. When the problem is coordination, one wants a reputation for having a reputation for strength, and prestige is more important than the truth.

Defining "degree of prestige"

The definition above treats the concept as dichotomous -- one has it or not -- but it is really a matter of degree. What factors increase or decrease prestige? The natural approach to making it continuous is to note the elements in the definition that are really matters of degree, such as the second-order beliefs about the strength of the trait, or the perceived first-order beliefs of this, or the degree of desirability of the trait, or the degree to which the group's beliefs give the party influence. The common usage of "prestige" probably takes account of all of these, but this section will consider only the first, the strength of the second-order beliefs. The degree of prestige will depend on how highly everyone estimates everyone else's estimate of the party's quality. Some conclusions from this modification would stand even if one introduced a more complex definition.

Define the party's *degree of reputation* as the average taken over the group of the estimates of the quality, and define the *degree of prestige* as the average over the group of each observer's estimate of the degree of reputation. In Figure 1 the observed party holds the trait to an objective degree of 5. The thinking eyeballs estimate it at 7 and 4 – for some reason they are

slightly mistaken here, but there is no assumption that they will be accurate. Thus its reputation is $(7 + 4)/2 = 5.5$. Moving to the next level of beliefs, each knows that the other is observing and estimating the quality and each estimates the other's estimate, but neither is fully accurate about what the other thinks.⁸ The shaded eye believes the light one has an estimate of 3, and the light one thinks the shaded one's estimate is 5. Each is right about its own estimate, of course, following the principle that we know what we ourselves believe. Prestige is the average of the top four values in Figure 1: $(7 + 3 + 5 + 4)/4 = 4.75$.⁹

FIGURE 1 HERE

The numbers in Figure 1 are arbitrary; there is no account of how does each person

⁸ To make a decision involving prestige, an individual might need not just an estimate of the other's opinion, but a full distribution over all possible probabilities the other might hold. This is unnecessarily complex for the present purpose.

⁹ Note that each person's beliefs about their own beliefs is included in the average. This decision is largely arbitrary and it makes less difference in a larger group. Also, when the quality itself can be measured as in the box of Figure 1, it is possible to talk about prestige as having a numerical value. An estimate of a quantifiable property, as well as an estimate of the estimate, has the same dimensions as the original. If prestige were for growing large pumpkins, the pumpkins could be measured in pounds, the observers' estimate of their size would be in pounds, and their estimates of each others' estimates would also be in pounds. For possession of a nuclear arsenal, the scale might be number of weapons or their megatons or some index of the damage they do.

estimates the quality or the other's estimate. It would be better to have a systematic mechanism of how observers make their assessments. This will allow some simple calculations of how prestige might vary with certain changes in the structure of acquiring and communicating information about quality. This happens in the following scenario. There are only two observers, this being the smallest audience that gives a nontrivial prestige measure.

Scenario 1: There is a subject (S) and two observers (O_1 and O_2). The subject has an urn with two tokens, each either red (r) or blue (b). To have blue tokens is a desirable quality, and the number of blue tokens in the urn, either 0, 1 or 2, is called S's *strength*. The subject is called *Weak* if it has r-r, *Medium* for r-b, and *Strong* for b-b. The subject S knows the contents of its urn, but at the start, O_1 and O_2 do not, and believe that the three possibilities are equally likely. Each O draws one token, views it privately without showing it to the other, and replaces it in the urn. (It will not matter in this scenario whether S sees the color drawn.)

The sampling can be interpreted as the observers' direct private interactions with S, in which they gain some evidence about S's strength. Standard probability calculations reveal S's reputation and prestige as a function of the possible colors drawn by the O's. Suppose, for example, that both observers draw blue tokens. We can determine S's reputation: each O holds no probability that S is r-r, a 1/3 chance of S being r-b, and a 2/3 chance for b-b.¹⁰ (The b-b urn

¹⁰ For a single observer $P(r-b | \text{draw } b) = P(\text{draw } b | r-b) P(r-b) / [P(\text{draw } b | r-b) P(r-b) + P(\text{draw } b | b-b)] = .5 \times 1/3 / (.5 \times 1/3 + 1 \times 1/3) = 1/3$.

becomes more likely than r-b since it was more likely to produce the blue draw.) The observer's estimate of S's strength is then the probability-weighted average of the possible strengths, i.e., the expected number of blues: $0 (0) + 1/3 (1) + 2/3 (2) = 1 \frac{2}{3}$. Each observer's estimate will be the same, of course, because both drew blue, so S's reputation, the average of the two estimates, will be $1 \frac{2}{3}$ blue tokens. This is S's reputation, but finding the prestige takes a further probability calculation, with each updating S's likely strength based on what it drew, and then considering what the other would have drawn and be thinking. Continuing the assumption that both drew blue, an observer holds two possibilities for what the other may have drawn, and weights these by their appropriate likelihoods. The resulting prestige is 1.555 blue tokens. The reputation and prestige for all possible pairs of draws are:

	reputation	prestige
both O's draw red:	.333	.444
one draws red, other blue:	1.000	1.000
both O's draw blue:	1.667	1.555

On the average the subject will have one blue token and thus strength 1. In sampling mechanisms like these, although not in all models, prestige is closer to the average strength than reputation is. The noise introduced by the each observer trying to guess the other's draw makes the them more cautious about making estimates away from the average.

This probability-sampling model provides a reasonable, self-consistent way that observers might assess prestige. In the next two sections it will be modified to show the impact of various influences, such as publicly known events that confirm your quality, or deliberately

choosing to flaunt your strength.

2. Publicly known events and prestige

An important distinction is between a *known* event and a *publicly known* event. A known event is one that, when it happens, each group member knows. When a publicly known event occurs, each member knows it *and* knows the others know it, and so on, for all higher levels of belief. Each of us may hear some credible news individually without being sure how many others have heard it. If the news is announced at a meeting where we see each other present and listening, it becomes publicly known.¹¹ For an event to enhance prestige, it is not strictly necessary that it be publicly known, but that greatly helps since knowledge rises to the second

level, just where prestige is located. A modification of the last scenario shows this.

Scenario 2: Each observer draws a private sample, as in scenario 1. Then an all-seeing intelligence who knows what is in S's urn awards S a prize if it has at least one blue token (i.e., if it is r-b or b-b.) The prize is a public event for the two observers, i.e., they see each other watching the award.

Suppose that both O's draw a blue token. Ipso facto S has a blue token and will get the

¹¹ The idea has appeared under different names, such as a public event or an obvious event.

prize, but how does that change S's reputation and prestige? It has no effect on reputation since it is telling each O something that it already knew -- that S has a blue token. Accordingly S's reputation stays at 1.667. S's prestige, however, rises from 1.555 to 1.611. Prestige involves what O_1 thinks about O_2 's estimate and vice versa, and before the prize, for all O_1 knew, O_2 might have drawn red and be entertaining the possibility that S was r-r. The public award lets O_1 know that O_2 knows that S is above this minimum. In fact both observers now know the other is excluding the worst possibility, so the group's estimate of S's reputation rises. If each were told privately about the prize and thought the other did not know about it, this would not happen; S's prestige rises only because of the publicly known event.¹²

What makes an event publicly known? There are at least four conditions that promote it, and they clarify why nuclear weapons are effective bearers of prestige. First, it should have *sharply defined boundaries*. A reported increase in a country's "quality of life" is hard to exploit for prestige since the hearer is uncertain about what constitutes a better quality of life, and uncertain about what other hearers will understand by the phrase. Possessing a nuclear bomb, on the other hand, is not fuzzy -- the physical principle is qualitatively different from other weapons.

Quality of life is of course hard to measure. Measurability can help towards a public event but is not enough. Having a tall building is a sign of economic and technical strength and height can be precisely measured, but the boundary of "tall" is fuzzy. Having the world's tallest building, on the other hand, a distinction belonging to Malaysia at this writing, is a clear

¹² This phenomenon has been discussed in a number of puzzles around the concept of common knowledge (Geanokoplos, 1994.)

dichotomy. For the same reason having the first jet airliner (Canada), the first earth satellite (USSR), or the first supersonic airliner (Britain and France), were natural bearers of prestige. Sometimes the dichotomy is based on focality in the measurement scale, an example being the distinction between ships greater than 1000 tons.

Further elements contributing to a publicly known event are those that let each hearer know that the news has reached others and gotten their attention. It is helpful if the event is *unexpected and sudden*. It should also be *salient*, meaning that its occurrence should be naturally noticeable, dramatic and seize attention. A fourth property is that the event is *known to be of concern to the observers*. If everyone has a stake in it, either positive or negative, each hearer will expect others to attend to it and talk about it.

Nuclear tests are often surprises. They are kept secret to avoid world pressure to stop them or to avoid embarrassment in case they fail. They make headlines and controversy, so people are aware that others have gotten the news. It is ironical that just because the world worries about them, they are better carriers of prestige.

One dovish Indian editorialist wrote that his country had performed a nuclear explosion and now it was time for a “developmental explosion.” But events of social development do not usually explode; they are generally gradual. A decrease in infant mortality of 1 percent does not make headlines to ensure that everyone knows that everyone else knows it. An increase in literacy is open to statistical error, and the concept itself -- what counts as being literate -- is imprecise. Only rarely is a developmental advance sharply defined, sudden, salient and of wide concern, but in such a case the event should be fully exploited. An example is the eradication of smallpox. On the internet or in government publications, some countries cite the year when they

achieved this goal. A country's first democratic election is another publicly known event satisfying the criteria.

If a non-military advance does not have these features naturally, sometimes they can be added. One way is to publicly announce a contest or a challenge. A competition is dramatic, and winning is a discrete event. The Olympic Games, for example, seize international interest, and although there is no official winner overall, countries publicize their total medals. Nikita Khrushchev turned economic development into a contest, claiming that Soviet GNP would overtake the United States by 1980. In 1957, he challenged the United States to a guided missile targeting competition to be held at some deserted flying range with categories for various ranges of missiles (Anonymous, 1957). Although this was an instance of a competition over military prowess (or perhaps a bluff), it was on its face an attempt to make private knowledge public and indicates how challenges and contests can also be applied to developmental progress.

When the accomplishment is unmeasurable, it is still possible to award a prize. Many prizes have arisen just because of the unmeasurability, and for the reasons given above for the importance of prestige in such cases. The Nobel Prize has gained prominence because of the growing complexity of science. Physicists cannot know the value of a biologist's research so they pay attention to the prize, and it gains prestige because of its long history of eminent winners and its association with Swedish royalty. Its public nature is emphasized by the ceremony of its presentation (O'Neill, 1999a,b; Chwe, 2001), and like most other prizes, the winner receives some displayable token.

Awards have surprise value, publicity and discreteness, and so can turn fuzzy successes into publicly known events. They could be used more extensively to promote developmental

over military displays. An example is the Aga Khan Award for architecture in the Islamic world. Several winners are chosen every three years. In 2001 they included an elegant hotel in Malaysia and an arts council building in Lahore, but also simple architectural designs for the homeless in Rajasthan, India. The regular practice is to mix elite structures with projects for the poor, perhaps to avoid any association of winning with backwardness.

3. Displaying a quality can harm prestige

In the previous model, the subject won an award conferred from above, but building a nuclear weapon is strategically different since there one makes a choice to prove one's own quality. The next scenario, suggested by a model of Feltovich, Harbaugh and To (1998), makes an important point: trying for reputation and prestige can cost one in those very commodities. However, that is only one possible regime. The game possesses two equilibria and the other makes the conventional prescription that it pays to show your prowess. Which equilibrium holds is largely determined by the observers' expectations and the projection of these to the prestige-seeker.

Scenario 3: As in Scenario 1, the Subject's urn can be r-r, r-b or b-b, and each of two Observers draw a token from it. S sees what they drew. Then, however, the Subject has a move. If its urn is r-b or b-b, it can choose either to show a blue token to the O's or show nothing. If S shows a blue token, each O knows the other sees it. After S's move, each O will hold an estimate of S's strength. The goal of S is to maximize its reputation, i.e., the average of the two estimates. There is a further assumption that S has to pay a very small cost to show a token, so that if the reputational consequences of displaying or

not were absolutely equal, S would not show it.

The analogy here is a country deciding whether to build a weapon that requires some minimum technological skill, where building one to show that skill. In the first two scenarios the observers simply calculated probabilities based on their draws and modified their beliefs appropriately. The subject was passive. Here S makes a strategic choice of whether to show a blue, so it becomes a formal game. There is a circularity in the parties' surmises about each other's expectations and motives: S's decision to show or not depends on how S thinks the O's will interpret that, and the O's change their beliefs depending on how they see S's logic behind that choice. A reasonable response will be interpreted as an equilibrium, a set of plans to act and beliefs for each of parties that is consistent in the sense that no one would modify their own even if they knew the others'. Looking at equilibria in pure (non-probabilistic) strategies, a consideration of cases shows that there are exactly two. The first is the natural one, where S demonstrates the quality if it is able to. Both Strong and Medium display their blues.

Simple signaling equilibrium: S shows a blue token if it can.

The second equilibrium is not intuitive:

Countersignaling equilibrium: An S holding a blue token shows it only when some observer has drawn a red.

Thus, a Strong S (b-b) or Medium S (r-b) who had only blue tokens drawn will show nothing. In fact, at the countersignaling equilibrium if such a Subject displayed a blue token it would lose reputation. The Observers would have otherwise judged it as possibly Medium and

probably Strong, but a public display of a blue token would lead them to conclude it was certainly Medium.

The equilibrium seems to go against game models on revealing information (e.g., Milgrom, 1982; Milgrom and Roberts, 1986), which imply that whatever strength you have, refusing to show it will be interpreted in the worst way. This is plain intuition: if a policeman stops me, should I tell him that my license is in my pocket, and to just convince him of that I decline to show it? Because this equilibrium reverses the normal logic, Feltovich, Harbaugh and To gave it the name “countersignaling.” It has a rationale: if an S shows a blue when both Observers have drawn blues, each Observer can reason: “I drew a blue, so I decided that S was possibly r-b and more likely b-b. Now S is showing us a blue token. S knows that this is not telling me anything new, so S must have something to prove to the other Observer, who must have drawn r. So S must be r-b.”¹³ Each Observer can repeat this soliloquy and conclude that the other must have seen Red. An S who shows a blue token against the equilibrium loses prestige and reputation. In its decision whether to flaunt its blue token, the subject should worry: “What will each observer think about what the other observer is thinking about me?” Thus the countersignaling equilibrium is supported by considerations of prestige.

A good game model should reflect some worldly phenomenon, and countersignaling appears often enough when one is alert for it. Suppose you are a politician with a good reputation, and some enemy has accuses you of a corruption. You possess evidence that the

¹³ Orzach, Overgaard and Tauman (forthcoming) reach a somewhat similar conclusion in the context of choosing an intensive or restrained advertising campaign.

accusation is wrong; the evidence is not decisive but it is significant. Should you present it, or should you declare that the accusation “does not dignify a response”? The latter posture has a long tradition, and the countersignaling equilibrium gives a rationale for it. To produce your evidence would suggest to each observer that the others had private reasons to doubt you and thus its own estimate of your honesty was too high.

It is important to understand what the logic of countersignaling is not saying. It is not that a Strong player has already impressed people, so showing a blue token is not worth the cost. The cost of showing blue was arbitrarily small and introduced only to eliminate some uninteresting equilibria. One could drop it or even stipulate that the subject pays a small cost to *not* show a blue, and the countersignaling equilibrium would still be present. Countersignaling is also different from a notion of Morgenthau’s, who cautioned against seeking more prestige than one deserves. He called this the “policy of bluff” and was certainly right that it can backfire, but that is not the point here. A Strong subject who goes against the equilibrium and shows a blue token is in no way bluffing – it really is Strong. Perhaps the idea closest to countersignaling in past literature is Nicholson’s “prestige through self-restraint,” an example of which he took to be the British policy of being generous to its colonies relative to other European imperialist states (1937, 32).

Which of the two equilibria holds depends on the all parties’ expectations but the world community has a clear preference for countersignaling since it involves less frequent nuclear demonstrations – a token is shown $1/4$ of the time, versus $2/3$ for the simple signaling equilibrium. Which regime is currently being followed? Since some nuclear acquisition would occur in both, the state’s overt moves will not tell an analyst which one is being followed. A further

complication is the possibility of an historical shift from one equilibrium to the other. However it is possible to collect deeper evidence, for example the reasons why countries seek or forswear the weapons. The model predicts that under countersignaling, the non-nuclear group will include both the most technically backward countries, who cannot do it, and the most technically advanced ones, whose skill is not in doubt. One conjecture is that after World War II the international community started at the simple signaling equilibrium. (Thayer, 1993, provides evidence connecting the British and French programs to prestige.) Then, one can posit, it went over to countersignaling and, other things equal, technically advanced countries rejected the weapons. In fact there seems to have been a change after the first two decades -- the slow pace of proliferation was quite contrary to the predictions of experts. The shift was spurred by various changes, especially the growth of a norm against nuclear use (Tannenwald, 1999).¹⁴

The main purpose of the model is to clarify the strategy of prestige, and an important feature is that there are two equilibria in this game. A proliferator's behavior is set not only by its interests and resources, but by other factors, including history, customs and culture. These factors operate through its expectations about the rest of the world's expectations, and this gives

¹⁴ The fact that countries like Britain and France have retained their weapons does not disprove a countersignaling regime, since having shown their technical ability, the choice of keeping or abandoning the weapons was not relevant to convincing the world of their technological skill. Their weapons may be "prestige symbols," based on a mechanism treated below. Also, this conjecture does not imply that the system is at its best possible state. In a more fully developed model than the one presented here, countries' parameters would vary continuously and one might expect a continuum of countersignaling equilibria with amounts of nuclear acquisition.

the world community leverage to change the situation. There are many small actions that would help move countries away from simple signaling. A 1965 US State Department telegram suggested that the phrase “nuclear power” should not be used as a synonym for nuclear weapons state. Civilian nuclear reactors represent power, it argued sensibly, and making the criterion one of military nuclear technology betrays a mode of thought that encourages proliferation.

Another instance of equating nuclear weapons with power is the United Nations Security Council (Rostow, 1965), whose five permanent members have been more or less the same as the declared nuclear powers. Enlarging the group to include non-nuclear states would help. Aside from formal institutions, it is important how a country’s diplomats are treated face to face. Underneath the explanations of Indian politicians for their nuclear tests, one finds a theme of rejection of their ideas and deserved status in diplomatic interactions (Ghosh, 1998). This treatment fortifies the simple signaling equilibrium by suggesting that one’s prestige is low until one has tested a weapon.^{15, 16}

Even under the countersignaling equilibrium some countries of middle technology will want to show their strength, such as it is. A peace-minded response then would be to promote the expectation that other manifestations than weaponry are better evidence. The State

¹⁵ There is analogy with systemic approaches in personal counseling: the notion that a family member’s harmful behavior can be corrected only by looking at the behavior of others around the person, or the notion that answers to teenage tobacco use, violence or drugs lie in changing the attitudes and behavior of adults.

Department memo anticipating Chinese tests (McGhee, 1961), quoted above, went on to propose a covertly-organized campaign to promote the view that developing nuclear weapons was technically unimpressive. According to other declassified documents, US policymakers tried to encourage substitute programs to gain prestige, typically technical and nuclear-related. Scientific exchanges and sponsorship of conferences on nuclear power were discussed for India (Lavoy, 1993), as well as scientific help on space programs and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy (US State Department, 1965). One State Department document suggested that Japan be encouraged to build a nuclear merchant fleet (US State Department, 1964.) To counter Chinese prestige gains over India from a test, the United States also considered conveying intelligence information to India to allow it to announce the details of the Chinese explosion (Lavoy, 1997). Within the game model this corresponds to degrading the evidentiary link between the demonstration and one's actual strength. A further policy, which President Clinton seemed to be following after the Indian and Pakistani tests, is to avoid public statements that the country's motive was prestige. Pointing that out recognizes the connection and reinforces the simple signaling equilibrium.

Metaphors for prestige

In summary, the scenario indicates that a proliferator's prestige is set not only within its borders, but partly by a world community. One reason the rest of the world overlooks its options involves the usual ways we think about prestige. Conceptual metaphors are ways of thinking and talking about abstractions that translate a constellation of concepts into another domain that

is less abstract (Lakoff, 1987). Money becomes a liquid, so it can “flow,” or one’s assets can be “frozen,” or one can “pour it down the drain.” A metaphor helps us think about complicated issues, but when the domains are not exactly matched it can be misleading. The analysis of prestige can be compared with the common way of thinking about it as expressed in a conceptual metaphor.

The standard metaphor treats prestige as a commodity that one acquires, holds, bears or confers. Especially in the United States, the metaphor becomes more particular and prestige turns into money. It can be saved, invested or squandered. Examples come from the 1990-1998 debates of the U.S. House and Senate, contained in the Thomas database: out of 199 usages of the word in the foreign policy context, prestige was “on the line” 18 times; “committed” 16 times; “invested” 8 times; “squandered” or “wasted” 7 times; “risked” or “at risk” 11 times; “staked” or “at stake” 7 times, and “contributed” to a cause twice. Legislative records from Britain, Australia and India provide more examples, and translation databases such as the World News Connection give more still. (A remarkable fact about “prestige” is the very wide appearance of its cognates across the world’s languages, so that one can have some reasonable expectation that the translation is the natural one.) The countries examined were the United Kingdom, India, Iran, Brazil, Iraq, North Korea, Ukraine and Russia. Even with the recognition that the word may have a slightly different range of mean, it is notable that the money metaphor is far stronger in the United States than elsewhere. There is nothing inevitable about this metaphor. In English as spoken in India, for example, someone “makes something a prestige issue,” or something “becomes a matter of prestige,” a phrasing that is quite different and gives a role to all concerned.

From the definition and the models it is clear that prestige functions differently from a commodity held by a bearer. It is in really in everyone's hands -- someone can have prestige without knowing it, for example. The money or commodity metaphor moves the focus entirely to the errant state, and it may be hard to change that country's course. The world community, however, may have the motive and means to disassociate nuclear weapons from prestige.

4. Generic prestige

Some historical episodes reveal another mechanism behind prestige. In the prelude to World War I, a government minister announced that if Austria remained passive after the assassination at Sarajevo, the country's "prestige would come to an end" (quoted by Sylvan, Pugliese and Graff, 1998). If Austria allows itself to be treated this way now, he was implying, it will be treated poorly in the future. This is different than the argument that unless Austria convinces the world that everyone recognizes that it has a certain quality, it will be treated poorly. There is no reference to an Austrian inner trait – the issue is its behavior.

In his chapter on prestige (1948), Morgenthau describes a similar example. In 1805 Napoleon and Pope Pius VII were to meet on the road to Nemours and travel together to Paris. The Emperor arranged that the Pope in his white shoes would have to walk to the carriage across the dirt, and contrived that the Pope would sit on his left. According to the Duke of Rovigo, whose memoirs Morgenthau used for his account, ". . . this first step decided without negotiation upon the etiquette to be observed during the whole time that the Pope was to remain at Paris." Morgenthau cites this as prestige, and whether the story is true or not it seems at least plausible, and it does not involve any specific inner quality. In both cases influence is determined by the

precedent of past influence or deference. Prestige becomes circular, with influence begetting prestige which means more influence. The formal definition is:

A party *X* has *generic prestige* in a group if

- (a) the group members believe that the group members generally believe that *X* has influence in the group,
- (b) on account of (a), *X* gains influence in the group.

The first definition included the idea that the trait is desirable, but that is unnecessary here, since the trait is influence and we can assume that the members want it. Figure 2 shows the parallel nature of the two definitions. Each oval represents a proposition. With generic prestige, the role of the specific trait is played by influence itself and it is fairly accurate to say that generic prestige is prestige for having prestige. Both are subtypes of the same concept.

FIGURE 2 HERE

5. Prestige symbols

One kind of public event conferring prestige is the possession of a prestige symbol. Prestige means influence, but the process of assigning influence often generates a coordination problem for a group. Members want to act together in choosing a leader, partly because the group will benefit from unity, and also because no member wants to be following one leader when the rest are following another. Whether someone has influence in the group can become a self-fulfilling prophecy: if everyone is aware of a general expectation favoring a certain party,

that person may be chosen without an objective reason. Expecting the rest to choose the individual is grounds enough for each person to go along. The coordination game has multiple equilibria, then, and the choice among them may be determined by apparently arbitrary and conventional factors.

A *prestige symbol* is a member's possession that the group uses as a cue for coordination on allocating influence -- a large bombard, colonies, battleships, or nuclear weapons. It is generally a scarce commodity, since coordination is undercut if it is freely available. Its possession has to be a publicly known event, so a national airline that flies to other countries would do better than a subway system in the national capital. It can either be subsumed under specific prestige, if it is evidence that the person has some objective trait, or it can be generic prestige -- if the group is willing to grant it to the party that in itself is public evidence of a belief in the party's influence.

To understand what makes for effective prestige symbols, it is important to understand what makes them symbolic. They are symbolic in the focal symbol sense, in contrast to the other categories of value or message symbols (O'Neill, 1999a). (The distinction will be outlined here. The reader is referred to the more complete description for a discussion of symbolism in general.) When the group faces a game of coordination, focal symbols focus the members' choice on a certain joint action. In this case the game involves allotting influence. They are symbolic in that they "represent" what the group will do: possession of the prestige symbol is associated with a larger class of events, general influence, and tends to induce the group to coordinate on giving influence to the particular possessor. A general focal symbol is associated with its larger category (its "meaning") either by analogy or prototypicality, but prestige symbols

in particular seem to function in the latter way – they are usually prototypes, e.g., of modern technology or powerful weapons. Prototypes, in turn, can arise in different ways, by convention (stereotypes of their class), by being squarely in the middle of their class, or as ideals, extreme or perfect examples of the feature defining the class. Prestige symbols tend to be ideal prototypes. This fits with the condition mentioned that they should be exclusive. The prestigious possession then is an ideal example of the kind of resource that yields influence, even though in the particular context the item itself might not confer influence at all. Nuclear weapons are ideal prototypes of weapons. They are not stereotypical weapons -- a gun would fit that role better -- but if the essence of a weapon is to destroy they are the extreme.

It is hard to construct prestige symbols for social or developmental events. One reason is that many social institutions or policies have many more possible purposes, making it hard to identify the extreme. Further often social developments are less associated with influence than military ones. Those that are so associated – such as universities and technical or economic achievements – are more likely to succeed as symbols.

6. Sources of national prestige through history

How have nations gained or lost prestige? Collecting past cases tests the definition and ensures that it is not overly tied to recent experiences. *Historical Abstracts* is a reference aid that collects abstracts from academic historical books and journals in many languages, excluding American history. Typically each abstract contains a brief story of an historical event. The computerized version was searched for abstracts containing the word “prestige” applied to a state in an international context, with enough information presented to identify the source or cause of

the prestige. There were 249 causes identified. (In some instances a single abstract generated more than one cause of prestige.) Either gains or losses in prestige were included, as were instances where a state was simply expecting a gain or loss. The causes were grouped into ten categories based on the surface similarities of causes without interpretation.

A. Military possessions and actions – 66 cases. The size of this category indicates the connection of prestige to influence. Prestige attributed for military holdings accounts for 18 cases, but the largest subgroup involves 39 military combat events identifiable as successes or failures. Sometimes the experience is taken as reflecting on the quality of a state's armaments or its military expertise. The possession of a large navy was often mentioned, perhaps because navies were especially visible to foreign countries. In line with this was an emphasis on foreign naval bases and naval visits.

B. Moral actions – 39 cases. Helping foreign individuals in need accounted for 17 of the cases. The latter includes Russia's actions as a protector of Christendom, China's construction of railways in Africa, and Argentina's role as a champion of labor at the ILO. Foreign aid conferred prestige. A further eight involved actions to promote peace: acting as a mediator, agreeing to treaties, or losing prestige by pursuing unjust wars. The next subcategory of seven cases involved standing with allies in a conflict, and respecting another state's sovereignty accounted for four mentions.

C. Intellectual, cultural and sports achievements – 28 cases. Ten examples involved

technological success or failure – the possession of airlines or airships, nuclear power technology, space technology, or, on the negative side, the prestige cost of Chernobyl. Culture and science were exemplified nine times, including the founding schools of higher learning, such as Hebrew University, or conducting foreign scientific expeditions. Five cases involved national sports programs. Consistent with the public nature of a prestige-bearing event, an emphasis was on world competitions and the Olympics. Four abstracts referred to elaborate architecture in the capital city.

D. Being deferred to or not defied, having influence – 25 cases. This group includes, for example, standing up to an adversary, having one's citizens treated well in foreign places, diplomatic successes forwarding one's interests, and extraction of compensation for damages from another state.

E. Holding foreign territory – 21 cases. This group includes colonies and empire, plus other examples such as South American states' claims to sections of Antarctica. These possessions constitute prestige symbols.

F. Internal strength and order – 19 cases. Six times prestige was connected to economic or financial power, such as Italy's reevaluation of the lira for prestige reasons, or Britain's placing the sterling on the gold standard. Internal stability and support, and a competent administration accounted for seven more cases, and the final six involved civil liberties and the rule of law. In the latter group, France lost prestige, it was alleged, for the Dreyfus affair, as did the United

States for Watergate.

G. Recognition by other countries – 17 cases. This category includes acceptance into international organizations such as the League of Nations or European Economic Community, choice as the host of a meeting, attending an exclusive conference, the exchange of diplomatic visits or the signing of treaties recognizing one's importance.

H. Independence or assertiveness – 14 cases. This category includes diverse examples, but all would be typed as generic prestige. Examples are asserting one's sovereignty in the face of a nearby large power, sending forces to a military engagement (without reference to one's ultimate success), or, on the negative side, shrinking from a conflict involving important interests.

I. Foreign involvement – 10 cases. Simply being on the scene confers prestige. Most of the contexts involved trade: trading with the New World brought prestige to European powers in colonial times, and being active in arms exports also counted.

J. Possession of allies – 9 cases. All of these involve generic prestige.

One other use of the word did not seem to fit the present definition. Visram (1989) told of Indian troops recuperating in Britain during World War I, whose letters home were censored for any complaints. The goal was to protect British "prestige." Within the system proposed here, private letters are an odd context to apply the word, but one cannot expect fully consistent

usage, and this abstract was the only clear counterexample found. The preponderance of examples that fit help to confirm the present approach.

Both specific prestige and generic prestige were reasonably prevalent. The series of examples of prestige that Morgenthau offers in his chapter also divide roughly evenly between the two types. The cases confirm the definitions insofar as the events are generally visible and public ones. Navies and naval visits gain prestige; armies are less often mentioned. Consistent with the idea of a public event, they tend to be discrete ones – it is not so much another’s friendship that counts, but signing a treaty of friendship. Except for the case noted there was no talk about private prestige or with raising one’s prestige with another single individual. Others publicly showing their attitudes to you are mentioned often – having allies, being invited to conferences, and even very mild honors like membership in the UN. These cases speak directly to prestige as a second-level belief, since it has members of the group demonstrating their regard for the subject.

7. Past accounts of prestige and related concepts

A well-known definition outside of political science is from the sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951), for whom prestige is “the relative esteem in which an individual is held in an ordered system of differentiated evaluations.” However, esteem is always relative and always involves differentiated evaluations. After redundancies are eliminated, Parsons seems to be equating prestige with esteem, and one wonders why he did not say that directly. His definition ignores the public nature of prestige -- someone who is esteemed by many people but only

secretly does not hold prestige.¹⁷

The international relations literature most frequently cites Morgenthau: prestige is “reputation for power.” He stated that “power” here meant power over people, wielded by one mind over another, rather than power over inanimate objects -- others comply with your wishes because you change their incentives, perhaps by threatening military force -- so he might then said reputation for having psychological power.” This seems somewhat like the present approach to generic prestige, but his term “reputation” needs clarification. If it refers to a first order belief the definition is not adequate. Imagine a country with large military resources surrounded by small neighbours. It interacts with them pairwise, and intimidates them into accepting its way. When each small state goes along it is paying no attention to what the others may be thinking or doing in regard to the hegemon. In this case, the large state has both power and a reputation for power, so Morgenthau would have to call this prestige. However our intuition says that it is not. These are disconnected acts of pure coercion. The present definition would agree that prestige is not involved since the beliefs that induce compliance are only first order -- each small state knows the large one’s military resources.

Morgenthau’s definition is close to Hawtrey’s earlier account (1930): “[t]he reputation for strength is what we call prestige.” Nicholson (1937), however, defined prestige as “power based on reputation,” apparently reversing Hawtrey and Morgenthau. This includes an element of the present definition that was missing from Morgenthau. Other international relations definitions were given by Herz (1951) (“the esteem or credit accorded to a man by others. . . . Insofar as prestige means being considered powerful by others, it confers power upon its

¹⁷ Wegener (1992) gives a more recent sociological treatment.

possessor . . .”); McGinn (1971) (“the reservoir of favorable opinion accorded to an individual by members of a particular group”); Gilpin (1981): (“the reputation for power, and military power in particular . . . the credibility of a state’s power and its willingness to deter or compel other states . . .”); and Sylvan, Graff and Pugliese (1998): “the recognition of a certain proficiency at precisely those types of interactions most valued [because they form the basis of] the group.”) There seems to be agreement that prestige involves credibility and esteem and power that confers power, but just how these are combined varies. The important elements added here are the second-order belief and the frequently circular interaction between that belief and influence.

None clearly differentiate the concept from others like reputation, esteem or status. These other concepts are different from prestige, and this section will discuss honor, face, status, legitimacy and moral authority (O’Neill, 1999a.) The closest relative is *moral authority*, which can be seen as a particular kind of prestige that is acquired for morally good acts and that yields a particular type of influence in the group, a special voice on moral issues. *Status* a better word than prestige when there is a defined hierarchical system, as in an organization with ranks and titles. The related concept of *legitimacy* can be defined as the group’s belief that a party has a right to authority by virtue of the party’s institutional role. It requires a formal group structure like status, but shares the moral element of moral authority. Another concept, the party’s degree of *face* (as in the expression “losing face”), is the first and second-order belief in the group that the members will defer to the party in interactions. It is close to generic prestige but stresses direct interactions among parties involving deference, not granting influence from a distance. Finally, *personal honor* involves a certain property of the individual, not the group’s belief.

Although the elements vary by culture, it generally means that the individual's goals include a willingness to defend the group, to keep those promises that are suitably given, to ensure that the group see the individual as honorable. Unlike prestige, face and status, this trait resides in the individual as their motivation and goal, not in the group's response to the individual. *Social honor* or perceived honor is the group's estimate of personal honor.

8. Conclusion

This paper supports Morgenthau's argument that prestige is relevant in modern international politics. It validates some past intuitions about prestige and produces other conclusions that are not obvious. It shows how metaphors may be misleading our informal thinking.

The message for policy is that states opposed to proliferation have further avenues than raising impediments to acquiring nuclear weapons or making threats and bribes. These realpolitik or technical approaches to proliferation have become dominant, but looking back several decades can find good examples of how to manipulate prestige, and the paper provides a theoretical basis for them. Prestige is linked to nuclear weapons because of certain of their properties – the sharp border between nuclear and conventional arms, the salience to the world of a new nuclear weapons state, both because of the suddenness of nuclear tests and the widespread worry they generate, and finally their symbolism of influence. Substitute sources of prestige around social and economic development can be found if these mechanisms are kept in mind. Further, it may be possible to shift the regime further to one where nuclear weapons are avoided just as a way to show modernity. The linking of the weapons and prestige depends on the

behavior of all states, not just the potential proliferators.

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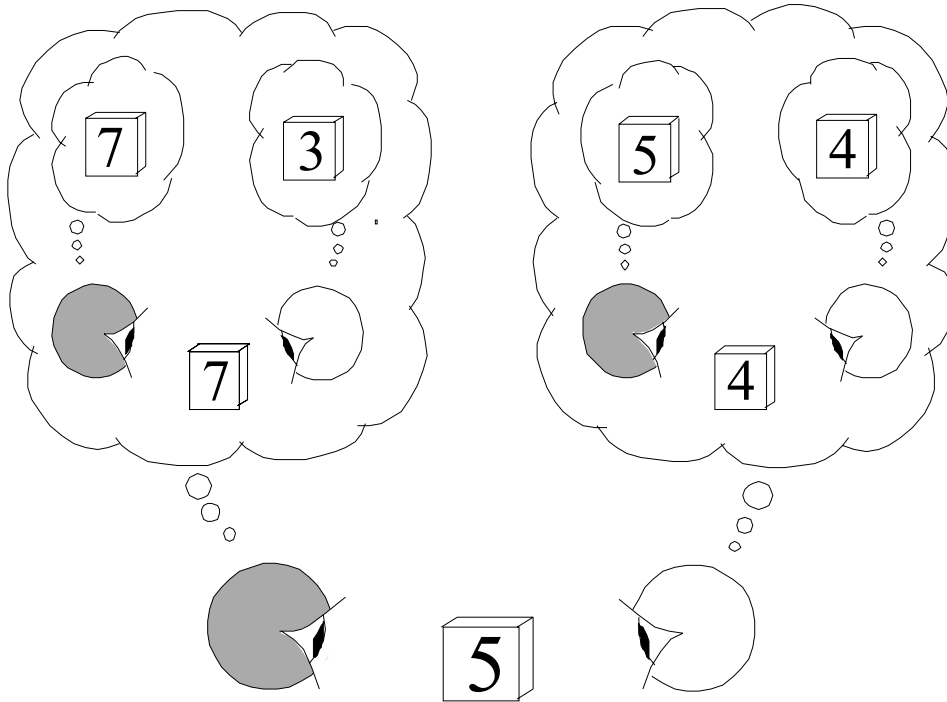
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$$\text{Prestige} = [(7 + 3)/2 + (5 + 4)/2]/2$$

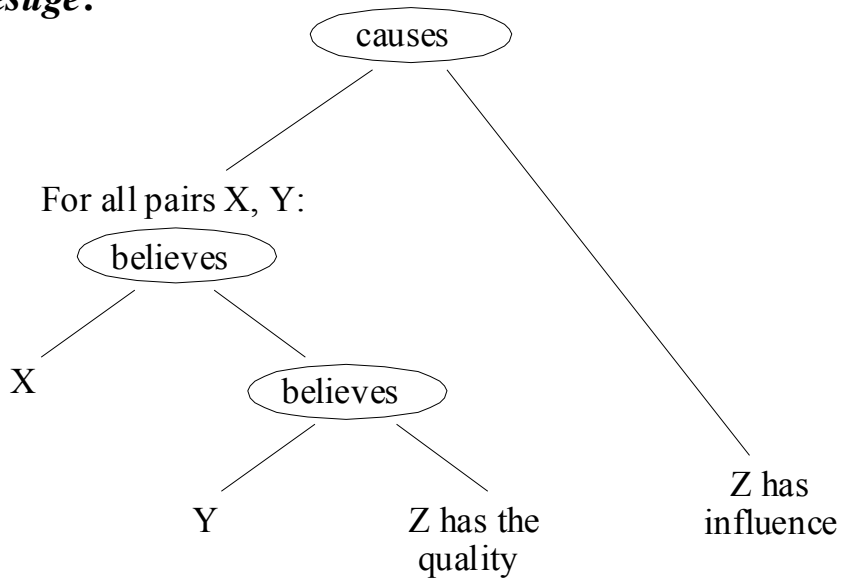
$$= 4.75$$

$$\text{Reputation} = (7 + 4)/2 = 5.5$$

$$\text{Quality} = 5$$

Figure 1. Specific prestige for a measurable commodity.

*Specific
prestige:*



***Generic
prestige:***

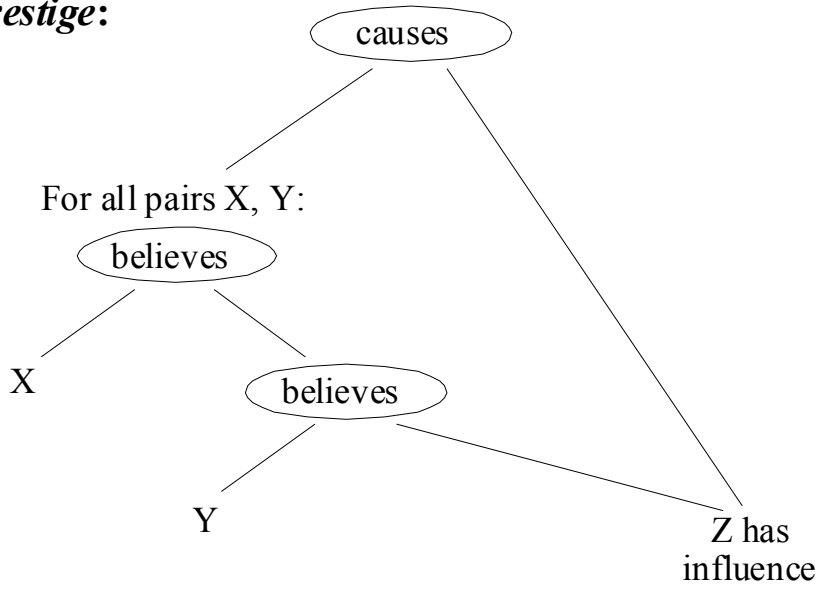


Figure 2: Specific versus generic prestige.