

# The Origins of Reputation: Behavior, Visibility, and Personality

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Cite as: Cameron Anderson and Aiwa Shirako. (2007). "The Origins of Reputation: Behavior, Visibility, and Personality." IRLE Working Paper No. 153-07. <http://irle.berkeley.edu/workingpapers/153-07.pdf>

# Institute for Research on Labor and Employment

*Institute for Research on Labor and Employment*

*Working Paper Series*

(University of California, Berkeley)

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*Year 2007*

*Paper iirwps'153'07*

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## Abstract

Functional theories of reputation imply that individuals' reputations are tied to their history of behavior. However, indirect evidence suggests that the link between reputation and behavior may be tenuous at best. In three studies we tracked the development of reputations over time among MBA students in negotiation classes. We found that individuals' reputations were linked to their history of behavior, but not strongly. However, the relation between reputation and behavior was more robust for some individuals than others. Specifically, for individuals who were well-known and received more social attention in the cohort, their reputation was strongly related to their behavior. In contrast, for less visible individuals who were more ignored by others, their behavior had little impact on their reputation. Finally, individuals' behavior history in the negotiations was related to their trait agreeableness. This latter finding suggests that personality does shape behavior in negotiations, in contrast to some previous assertions; however, individuals' behavior must be measured in aggregate, across negotiations, rather than in single interactions. The findings have implications for our understanding of reputation, the costs and benefits of social visibility, and personality effects in negotiations

The Origins of Reputation: Behavior, Visibility, and Personality

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Keywords: Reputation, negotiation, personality, agreeableness, visibility, status,

Running Head: Origins of Reputation

Draft date: March 9, 2007

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## Abstract

Functional theories of reputation imply that individuals' reputations are tied to their history of behavior. However, indirect evidence suggests that the link between reputation and behavior may be tenuous at best. In three studies we tracked the development of reputations over time among MBA students in negotiation classes. We found that individuals' reputations were linked to their history of behavior, but not strongly. However, the relation between reputation and behavior was more robust for some individuals than others. Specifically, for individuals who were well-known and received more social attention in the cohort, their reputation was strongly related to their behavior. In contrast, for less visible individuals who were more ignored by others, their behavior had little impact on their reputation. Finally, individuals' behavior history in the negotiations was related to their trait agreeableness. This latter finding suggests that personality does shape behavior in negotiations, in contrast to some previous assertions; however, individuals' behavior must be measured in aggregate, across negotiations, rather than in single interactions. The findings have implications for our understanding of reputation, the costs and benefits of social visibility, and personality effects in negotiations.

### The Origins of Reputation: Behavior, Visibility, and Personality

Reputations are thought to serve a number of social functions. Possessing information about others helps us avoid individuals who might cheat or deceive us and pursue relationships with those who are more cooperative and trustworthy (Bromley, 1993; Dunbar, 2004; Granovetter, 1975; Hogan, 1996). Reputations also help communities increase pro-social behavior among individual members. Positive reputations bring status, acceptance, and willing exchange partners, whereas negative reputations incur collective punishment and ostracism (Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Flynn, 2003; Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Homans, 1951; Blau, 1964; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998; Tetlock, 2002; Thibault & Kelley, 1959), so reputations can incentivize individuals to behave more cooperatively and less selfishly.

Functionalist theories of reputation assume that there are links between individuals' reputations and their history of behavior. Individuals who have behaved in cooperative and trustworthy ways tend to have a better reputation than those who have behaved in selfish or deceptive ways. Without such links, reputations would fail to serve their putative functions. They would lead us to trust those we should avoid and avoid those we should trust, for example.

But are individuals' reputations closely tied to their behavior? Many findings suggest not. Individuals behave differently across different situations (e.g., Mischel, 1968), which might preclude them from forming a coherent, unified reputation (Bromley, 1993). Further, cognitive attention is a limited resource and maintaining a mental account of others' behavior is extremely difficult (Byrne & Whiten, 1988). Individuals therefore cannot monitor everyone else's behavior in their community; they quickly forget their

perceptions of others (e.g., Hastie & Kumar, 1979) and attend to secondhand information about others only selectively (Inman, Reichl, & Baron, 1993). As Allport (1937) argued long ago, individuals' reputations may not be a valid indicator of their true character.

Between these two opposing perspectives – that reputations reflect individuals' past behavior and that reputations are incoherent and invalid – we argue that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Individuals' reputations should be linked to their behavior because community members are motivated to gather and share accurate information about each other (e.g., Baumeister, Zhang, & Vohs, 2004; Dunbar, 2004), but the link should not be strong for the average person, given the aforementioned limitations in cognitive attention and information exchange. However, in all communities, some individuals receive more attention than others (Chance, 1967; Derber, 1979; Fiske, 1993), and thus the relation between behavior and reputation should depend on the individual. For individuals who are more prominent and visible in the community, their behavior should have a strong impact on their reputation, whereas for less visible individuals, their behavior should have little to no effect on their reputation.

We tested these hypotheses by examining the development of reputations among negotiators. Negotiators' reputations can have a profound impact on their success. Negotiators with positive reputations more easily find willing bargaining partners (Glick & Croson, 2001; Millinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002), and achieve better bargaining outcomes (Tinsley, O'Connor, & Sullivan, 2002). When individuals face a negotiator with a positive reputation, they trust that negotiator more, communicate interests and priorities more openly, and use fewer defensive and distributive bargaining tactics

(Tinsley et al., 2002). However, to our knowledge negotiation scholars have not examined the origins of negotiator reputations, leaving this critical issue unaddressed.

### *Defining and Conceptualizing Reputation*

A reputation is defined as the set of perceptions a community forms about the personal qualities of one of its members (Bromley, 1993; Granovetter, 1975; Hogan, 1996). According to many theorists, reputations are most appropriately examined in communities that exist for extended periods of time and that allow members to share information about each other (Bromley, 1993, Emler, 1990, Nowak & Sigmund, 1998). Therefore, while studies of first impressions (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000) or of perceptions in small laboratory groups (Kenny, 1994) can inform us of some of the processes that underlie reputation, they do not provide a complete understanding of reputation development.

For example, studies of perceptions based on zero-acquaintance or “thin slices” (Ambady et al., 2000; Kenny, Horner, Kashy, & Chu, 1992) tell us how individuals are perceived at first glance, but these perceptions can change over time as the perceivers accumulate more information about the target (Snyder & Uranowitz, 1978). Studies of small laboratory groups (Kenny, 1994) inform us of the accuracy and consensus with which individuals are perceived in small groups, but accuracy and consensus about a target might differ in larger social communities, where perceptions are based on hearsay and rumor in addition to direct interaction with the target. Studies of close relationships can tell us how individuals are perceived by close others such as friends or romantic partners (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Swann, 1992), but these perceptions may not



represent all evaluations made in a community, including those made by more distant acquaintances (Kenny & Kashy, 1994).

### *Overview of Studies*

We examined the reputations that developed among Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students enrolled in negotiations classes. We focused on predicting these students' reputations for cooperativeness, a critical dimension of reputation (Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006; Granovetter, 1975; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998).

In Study 1 we examined the relation between individuals' reputations and their history of behavior. We tested the hypothesis that individuals who attained more integrative, or “win-win” outcomes and who behaved in cooperative ways would attain reputations as being cooperative. These data involved 160 separate negotiations and over 5 hours of data collection per participant.

In Study 2 we tested whether visibility, measured at the beginning of the term, predisposed individuals to establish a reputation at the end of the term. We tested the hypothesis that more visible individuals would be more likely to establish reputations for being cooperative or selfish. Therefore, social visibility can be a blessing and a curse, allowing individuals to be known for their positive as well as negative behavior patterns.

In Study 3 we tested whether the link between behavior and reputation is stronger for visible members than for less visible members. We tested the hypothesis that for visible individuals, their cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes would strongly predict their reputation; however, for less visible individuals, their cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes would not strongly predict their reputation. We also examined

whether individuals' behavior histories were linked to their personality traits. We tested the hypothesis that individuals' integrative outcomes and cooperative behavior would be linked to their trait agreeableness. The data in Study 3 involved 133 separate negotiation interactions and over 8 hours of data collection per participant.

These MBA samples were ideal for the study of reputations for many reasons. First, the negotiation classes lasted many weeks and the MBA students had ample opportunities in and out of class to exchange information about their fellow classmates. Second, these MBA students' reputations have real-life consequences; students' classmates comprise the core of their business network and their reputations are important to their career success (Flynn, 2003). These students had an average of 3-4 years of significant work experience beyond their undergraduate schooling, so they understood the importance of reputation. Third, testing the link between behavior and reputation would ideally involve tracking individuals' behavior history over time. In these classes, students negotiated with many other classmates over a series of weeks, which allowed us to assess their behavior history across negotiation interactions. Our aggregated approach to behavioral measurement has been advocated by many but used by few (see Diener & Larsen, 1984; Epstein, 1979; Fleeson, 2004; Moskowitz, 1982).

#### Study 1: Individuals' Behavior history and Their Reputation

An intuitive model of reputation formation would propose that when individuals interact with multiple people over time, they leave a trail of interaction partners who have formed perceptions of them. These interaction partners' perceptions comprise what can be called the individual's *firsthand reputation* ('firsthand' because the perceptions were based on direct, firsthand experience). These interaction partners might then tell others

about the individual, such as friends or colleagues, and those friends or colleagues might in turn tell others. The perceptions formed by these receivers of secondhand information comprise what can be called the individual's *secondhand reputation*.

There are many obstacles that might keep reputations from forming. In terms of firsthand reputations, individuals' behavior might be too variable across interactions to allow for a unified, coherent reputation to develop (Bromley, 1993). Classic and current research has shown that individuals can behave in cooperative ways in one interaction, but in deceptive ways in another, for example; cross-situation correlations in individuals' behavior tend to be in the low .30's (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Mischel, 1968; Fleeson, 2001). This inconsistency suggests each person with whom an individual interacts might form a different perception of that individual. Some would see the individual as nice and cooperative and others would view her as manipulative and selfish.

Moreover, within communities it can become difficult to impossible for individuals to keep track of all their fellow community members' behavior (Byrne & Whiten, 1988). Humans are cognitive misers (e.g., Taylor, 1998), which suggests they are unlikely to remember over time the perceptions they made of all their interaction partners. Much evidence suggests that memories of individuals fade easily and change over time, even after one week (e.g., Hastie & Kumar, 1979; Snyder & Uranowitz, 1978; Stangor & McMillan, 1992). If individuals are easily and quickly forgotten by their interaction partners, then a firsthand reputation is unlikely to accumulate. Only a few people at a given time would perceive that individual as cooperative or as selfish, for example.

In terms of secondhand reputations, individuals' interaction partners might not find their perception of an individual important or interesting enough to pass on to others (Emler, 1990). And those who receive any information about an individual might not care enough about it to pay attention to it and retain it over time. Indeed, studies suggest that receivers of secondhand information listen only selectively (Inman et al., 1993), which can lead to a divergence in perceptions between the provider and receiver of secondhand information (Gilovich, 1987; Inman et al., 1993).

In spite of the aforementioned inconsistencies in individual behavior and limitations in community members' attention, we expected individuals would in fact develop reputations based on their history of behavior. First, although individuals do show variability in their behavior across interactions, their average levels of behavior across interactions is highly consistent and systematic (Epstein, 1979; Deiner & Larsen, 1984; Fleeson, 2001; Moskowitz, 1982). For example, in one study the average level of agreeable behavior individuals exhibited across an entire week correlated  $r = .94$  with their average level of agreeable behavior they exhibit in another week – even though their cross-situation correlations were much lower (Fleeson, 2001). This suggests that although individuals might behave differently across specific negotiations, when their behaviors are averaged across interactions, their aggregated history of behavior should be systematic and provide the basis for a reputation.<sup>1</sup>

Second, within communities individuals are motivated to gather and share accurate information about fellow community members (Baumeister, 2004; Dunbar, 2004; Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Flynn, 2003; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998; Tetlock, 2002). As noted above, this information-sharing helps individuals successfully navigate their social

environments and communities promote cooperation (Bromley, 1993; Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Granovetter, 1975). Individuals' interaction counterparts should therefore be motivated to retain their evaluations of individuals' cooperativeness over time and to pass this information on to others, and others should also find this information important enough to retain over time.

### *Measuring Behavior Histories*

In the context of the MBA students we examined, we operationalized individuals' behavior histories in two ways. First, we measured the cooperativeness of individuals' negotiation outcomes in objective, economic terms. Specifically, we focused on the integrativeness of individuals' outcomes (Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Raiffa, 1982; Thompson, 1990). Integrative performance refers to how well individuals' agreements effectively satisfied both parties' interests. Integrative outcomes are typically measured in terms of joint profit, by summing each negotiator's individual outcome (Bazerman, Magliozzi, & Neale, 1985; Mannix & Neale, 1993). To reach integrative outcomes, individuals must engage in cooperative behavior by building trust, asking for and sharing information about preferences and priorities with their counterpart, and by agreeing to solutions that make both parties better off (e.g., Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Raiffa, 1982). Therefore we hypothesized that negotiators who achieved high integrative outcomes would develop a reputation as being more cooperative.<sup>2</sup>

Second, we measured how cooperatively individuals behaved in the negotiations, using ratings provided by their negotiation counterparts. Whether individuals are perceived as cooperative depends not only on their negotiated outcome, but also on the process by which that outcome was reached (e.g., Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu, 2006;

Thibault & Walker, 1975). Individuals' reputations for cooperativeness or selfishness should therefore stem from their behaviors in addition to their negotiated outcomes. For example, individuals who attained low integrative outcomes but who behaved very cooperatively and fairly might still attain a reputation for cooperativeness. We therefore hypothesized that individuals who behaved in cooperative and trustworthy ways would develop a reputation as being cooperative.

### *Methods*

*Participants.* Participants were 80 Masters of Business Administration students (45% male, 55% female) enrolled in two negotiation classes at a large business school. The courses lasted 6 weeks. The business school is comprised of 27% minority students; the average age is 28. There were no significant differences between the two classes on any variable nor any differences in effects, so we combined them into one sample.

*Procedure.* Participants engaged in four dyadic negotiation exercises over the course of four weeks.<sup>3</sup> Each exercise lasted between 30 min and 1 hr 15 min. Participants were randomly assigned to dyads and negotiation roles for their negotiation. In Week 1, participants engaged in a purely distributive negotiation that involved the purchase of a pharmaceutical plant (see Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001). In Week 2, participants engaged in a negotiation with integrative potential that involved an owner-operator of a gas station seeking to sell the station, and a representative of a large oil company ("Texoil") interested in buying it (Goldberg, 1997). In Week 3, participants engaged in a negotiation with integrative potential between a manager of an independent television station and a sales representative of a film company over a syndicated television show (Tenbrunsel & Bazerman, 2000). In Week 4, participants engaged in a negotiation of a

dispute between a real-estate developer and a carpentry contractor (Greenlaugh, 1993). Following each exercise, participants reported their agreement in the negotiation. They also privately reported their perceptions of their negotiation counterpart's cooperativeness on a questionnaire. Near the end of the course and after the four exercises had been completed, we measured individuals' reputations for cooperativeness through peer nominations.

*Behavior in the negotiation.* After each negotiation exercise, participants privately rated how much their negotiation partner strived to satisfy the participant's interests, his/her own interests, and how much their counterpart behaved in trustworthy ways, on a scale from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree"). After reverse-scoring the last item, the three items showed high reliability within each week, average coefficient alpha = .74 across weeks. We thus combined the three items into one measure of cooperative behavior for each week. As we discussed above, we did not necessarily expect individuals' to behave similarly across weeks. In fact, there was little reliability across weeks, alpha = .06. However, we assumed that an accumulation of opponents who perceived an individual positively or negatively would still lead to a positive or negative reputation (Fleeson, 2004). We thus averaged each week's cooperative behavior score into one overall measure of opponent-perceived cooperativeness,  $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = .63$ .

*Integrative negotiation outcomes.* The Week 1 negotiation over the sale of a biotechnology plant involved only the issue of price, making it a purely distributive negotiation. We therefore did not code for integrative outcomes in Week 1.

For the Week 2 negotiation over the sale of a gas station, station owners needed to sell for at least \$580,000. This amount would allow them to take a two-year vacation

sailing around the world, pay off their boat and cover their expenses for two years, and provide “safety money” that they would use upon return from vacation while looking for a new job. When participants begin negotiating this exercise, there seems to be no viable bargaining range, however, because the Texoil representatives are authorized to pay only up to \$500,000. The parties can overcome this problem by adding other issues to the agreement. For example, the Texoil representative could offer the sellers a job upon return from vacation or offer to pay for their gas and boat maintenance during the two-year trip. The promise of a job offer, for example, alleviates the need for the “safety money” and the station owner can sell for as low as \$486,250. Dyads reported whether or not they were able to reach an agreement, and if they reached an agreement, the terms of their deal. We coded these outcomes based on Anderson and Thompson’s (2004) system. Dyads were coded as “0” if they did not reach an agreement, “1” if they reached a non-integrative agreement, and “2” if they reached an integrative agreement. Non-integrative agreements were those in which the sale price was the sole issue, and no other issue was included. These agreements did not satisfy the station owner’s interests maximally (e.g., their need for a job after their vacation) or the Texoil representative’s interests maximally (e.g., their need for good managers). Integrative agreements were those that included additional issues such as a job offer upon return from vacation. To establish reliability of the codes, a second independent rater coded 20% of the negotiated deals using the same 0- to 2-point scheme; the two sets of judgments agreed perfectly.

For the Week 3 negotiation over a syndicated television show, the negotiable issues were broken up into three types. First, distributive issues were ones on which each side had opposing preferences. For example, the sales representatives wanted to sell for



as high a price as possible, but station managers wanted to buy it for as little as possible, and the price was equally important to each side. Second, tradable issues were those in which buyers and sellers had opposing preferences, but placed different values on them; therefore, they could trade concessions on one issue for gains on another. For example, for station owners, financing terms were less valuable than the number of times shows would air; for sales representatives the opposite was true. Therefore, parties could increase joint gains by trading a high number of airings per show for larger payments up front. Finally, compatible issues were ones in which participants' preferences were perfectly aligned with the other party. For example, both parties benefited if the sales representative sold an additional show to the station manager, as long as the price was within the specified bargaining range.<sup>4</sup> We first measured participants' raw-score outcomes by calculating the value of the agreement to them,  $M = \$4,287,939.28$ ,  $SD = \$1,262,614.72$ . To measure integrative agreements, we focused on the commonly used index of joint outcome, or the sum of dyad member's raw-score outcomes (Bazerman et al., 1985; Ben-Yoav & Pruitt, 1984; Mannix & Neale, 1993).

For the Week 4 negotiation that involved a dispute between a real-estate developer and a carpentry contractor, the heart of the dispute was the amount the developer would pay the contractor for his work on a condominium complex. A second issue was that the real-estate developer had loaned the contractor money years ago, and the developer would now like to call the loan. However, the only way the contractor can pay off the loan is by selling his own house at a loss. A third issue was that the contractor's business was leasing a building from the developer, but two months ago the contractor exercised an option to terminate the lease because he had found a building

with a cheaper rent. Since then, that alternative building has become unavailable, and the contractor would like to renew the lease with the developer. A final issue was that the contractor was two months' behind in rent due to a clerical error. Dyads could increase the integrative nature of the agreement in a few ways. For example, the developer could allow the contractor to continue leasing space, hire the contractor for any future work, help the contractor secure a condominium in which to live (if the contractor sold the house), invest in the contractor's house (if the contractor did not sell the house). Each dyad was given a point for including any such integrative issue in the deal. If the negotiation ended in an impasse the dyad was given a "0." To establish reliability of the coding of agreements, a second independent rater coded 20% of the negotiated agreements using the same coding scheme; these judgments agreed perfectly with the original coder's judgments.

To create overall scores for integrative outcomes across weeks, we standardized each participant's integrative score in each negotiation and then averaging those standardized scores,  $M = -.02$ ,  $SD = .63$ . These scores reflected how successful participants were in achieving integrative outcomes overall. Participants' integrative outcomes were not highly related to their counterparts' perceptions of their cooperativeness,  $r$ 's = .16, .03, and -.08, respectively, in Weeks 2, 3, and 4 (all  $r$ 's *n.s.*). This is consistent with recent evidence that there are typically low correlations between negotiators' objective outcomes and their feelings about the negotiation and their opponent (Curhan et al., 2006; Galinsky et al., 2002).

*Distributive negotiation outcomes.* For the sake of thoroughness, we also measured individuals' distributive outcomes, or their own individual outcomes across

weeks. For the Week 1 negotiation, higher prices reflected better distributive outcomes for sellers but worse distributive outcomes for buyers; lower prices reflected the opposite. Therefore, we operationalized participants' distributive outcomes in Week 1 by standardizing the agreed upon sales price, and reversing these standardized scores for buyers by multiplying them by -1. For the Week 2 negotiation, we operationalized participants' distributive outcomes in the same way, by standardizing sales prices agreed upon and reversing these standardized scores for buyers. We only coded for the distributive outcomes for dyads that reached an agreement. For the Week 3 negotiation, we calculated the proportion of the joint value captured by the participant, so that the integrative and distributive outcomes would be unconfounded. For the Week 4 negotiation, we ranked each dyad according to how well the real estate developer performed distributively, which was based primarily on how well he/she performed on the more important issues (e.g., how much was paid to the contractor for the condominium work, and whether the developer called the \$200,000 loan), and then by less important issues in the case of a tie (e.g., the rental rate for the contractor's space). To establish reliability of the coding of agreements, a second independent judge ranked all of the negotiated agreements using the same ranking scheme; these rankings correlated  $r = .82$  ( $p < .01$ ) with the original coder's rankings.

We then created aggregate scores for distributive outcomes across weeks by standardizing each participant's distributive score in each negotiation and averaging those z-scores,  $M = -.03$ ,  $SD = .56$ . Higher scores reflected achieving better distributive outcomes across weeks. Consistent with prior research (Curhan et al., 2006), participants' distributive outcomes were not significantly related to their counterparts' perceptions of

their cooperativeness,  $r$ 's = .11, .10, .05, and -.03, respectively, in Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4 (all  $r$ 's *n.s.*).

*Reputation for cooperativeness.* After the four negotiations were all completed, participants were asked to nominate their classmates along three categories: "Who are most trustworthy negotiators in the class?", "Who are the most gentle-hearted and sympathetic negotiators?", and "Who in the class would you want on your side in any given negotiation?" In measuring reputation, our main concern was how many of participants' classmates perceived them as cooperative (Bromley, 1993). Therefore, we gave participants a point every time a classmate nominated them along any of the three categories. To avoid reputation scores being inflated by receiving a high number of nominations from a small number of people, we did not give participants additional points if the same person nominated them for additional categories. The average number of nominations received was 2.43,  $SD = 1.75$ . There were no differences between men's and women's reputations for cooperativeness.

### *Results*

Were individuals with more positive behavior histories more likely to develop reputations than individuals with more negative behavior histories? We first examined whether individuals' reputations were related to their behavior in the negotiations. Consistent with expectations, individuals' behavior (as rated by their counterparts) predicted their reputation at the end of the course,  $r(80) = .29, p < .01$ . Therefore, individuals behaved more cooperatively were more likely to gain a positive reputation than individuals who behaved more selfishly. It is interesting to note that individuals' reputations were not predicted by their behavior in any single negotiation. In Weeks 1

through 4, the correlations between their behavior and reputation were  $r$ 's = .13, .21, .12, and .11, respectively (all  $r$ 's *n.s.*). Therefore, it seems that participants' accumulated history of behavior contributed to their reputations, rather than their behavior one single interaction.

Individuals' integrative outcomes overall did not significantly predict their reputation,  $r(80) = .16$ . However, individuals' integrative outcomes in Week 2 ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ) and Week 3 ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ) both predicted their reputation. Therefore, the null effect using the aggregate measure may have been due to the lack of relation only in Week 4, in which  $r = -.09, n.s.$  Individuals' distributive outcomes did not predict their reputations however,  $r(80) = -.04$ , and this null effect held up across Weeks 1 through 4 ( $r$ 's = -.01, -.06, .04, -.13, respectively). Therefore, these findings suggest that individuals' reputations were somewhat tied to their history of integrative outcomes, but not to their history of distributive outcomes. The more individuals achieved integrative outcomes, the more likely they were to gain a positive reputation in the community; however, the distributive outcomes they achieved were unrelated to their overall reputation.

In these MBA negotiation classes, the chances of obtaining an effect of individuals' behavior histories on their reputation might have been unrealistically high because after each negotiation exercise, each individual's negotiation outcome is displayed on the whiteboard for the entire class to see. Therefore, it might have been easier to establish a reputation here than it would be in the real world, where negotiation outcomes are not always made public. To help alleviate this concern, we tested whether individuals' reputations were predicted by their behavior even after we controlled for

their objective negotiation outcomes. If so, this would help demonstrate that our reputation effects were not simply a “whiteboard effect.” Individuals’ behavior predicted their reputation for cooperativeness ( $B = .82, SE = .29, p < .01$ ), even after controlling for their integrative negotiation outcomes ( $B = .51, SE = .30, p < .10$ ). This provides supportive evidence that individuals’ opponents, more than the whiteboard, were responsible for individuals’ reputation development.

### Study 2: Individuals’ Visibility and Their Reputation

We have argued that individuals’ reputations are not strongly tied to their behavior in part because cognitive attention is a limited resource; community members simply cannot pay attention to all other individuals’ behavior across all interactions. However, previous studies suggest that community members tend to pay more attention to some individuals than to others. In any community, whether an organizational department, country club, or high school, some individuals have higher levels of prominence and visibility than others. That is, some people known by a larger number of community members, are paid more attention in conversations, and are more gossiped about behind closed doors (Anderson et al., 2001; Bromley, 1993; Derber, 1979; Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). The origins of visibility often relate to the person’s overall influence and position in the social network (Anderson et al., 2001; Chance, 1967; Fiske, 1993).

More visible and prominent individuals should therefore be more likely to establish a reputation than less visible individuals. Visible individuals are more attended to and scrutinized by others, and should have a higher chance of achieving a reputation – good or bad – as fellow community members are more motivated to pay attention to and

share information about their behavior. For less visible individuals, they should be more likely to “fly under the radar” so to speak, in that their behavior should receive little attention from others and should not be seen as interesting enough to pass around.

We tested the hypothesis in Study 2 that visibility would predict reputations by again examining MBA students enrolled in negotiations classes. Specifically, we examined whether individuals’ visibility, measured at the beginning of the term, predicted their reputations measured at the end of the term. In the current sample, informal interviews confirmed that students became more visible by attending social functions, becoming involved in school activities, and serving on school committees.

#### *Measuring Firsthand and Secondhand, Positive and Negative Reputations*

We also tested directly whether visible individuals were more likely to establish both firsthand and secondhand reputations. That is, we wanted to examine the idea that visible individuals’ negotiation counterparts are more likely to retain perception of them long enough to contribute to their reputation (firsthand reputation), and that visible individuals are more likely to be talked about by fellow community members and that receivers of this information would retain their perceptions long enough to contribute to their reputation as well (secondhand reputation). Therefore, for our reputation measure, when participants nominated their classmates at the end of the term, we asked them to indicate whether the nomination was based on direct firsthand experience (i.e., whether they negotiated with the target) or secondhand information (i.e., whether they heard about the target from someone else) and considered each type of nomination separately and in combination.

To more directly test the idea that visible individuals were more likely to gain both a positive and a negative reputation, we also asked classmates to nominate individuals on both positive and negative dimensions. This would help address the concern that visible individuals are more likely to establish a reputation simply because they are viewed more positively in general. If supported, this hypothesis would highlight an ironic downside of being socially visible. Although previous work has typically framed visibility as a scarce social commodity that most individuals desire (Anderson et al., 2001; Derber, 1979), we hope to show that visibility can also present constraints on individuals' behavior. With more visibility comes more scrutiny, and thus individuals have higher chance of achieving a negative reputation when they behave selfishly or deceptively.

### *Methods*

*Participants.* Participants were 39 Masters of Business Administration students (66% male, 34% female) in a semester-long negotiation class at a large business school. The business school is comprised of 36% minority students; the average age is 29.

*Procedure.* To more confidently claim that visibility would have a causal effect on individuals' reputation, we assessed participants' visibility before any negotiation exercises were conducted. As in Study 1, participants then engaged in a series of negotiation exercises, each exercise on a different week; in this class participants engaged in 10 negotiation exercises. Participants were again randomly assigned to their opponents and into negotiation roles. At the end of the course, and after all exercises had been completed, we measured individuals' reputations for cooperativeness and selfishness



through peer nominations. Because we were focused on the main effects of visibility on reputation, we did not collect measures of individuals' behavior histories.

*Social visibility.* On the first day of class, participants rated every other classmate on how well they knew them on a scale from 0 ("Do not know this person") to 7 ("Know this person very well"). Therefore, each participant received 38 ratings from classmates. These ratings were reliable, coefficient alpha = .97, indicating some individuals were generally better known than others. We averaged the rating assigned to participants to form an overall measure of their social visibility,  $M = 1.96$  ( $SD = .89$ ).

*Reputation for cooperativeness.* Participants were asked to nominate their classmates along three categories related to cooperativeness: "Who were most trustworthy negotiators in the class?", "Who were the most gentle-hearted and sympathetic negotiators?", and "Who would you want on your side in any given negotiation?" We were interested only in nominations that were based on direct experience negotiating with the participant or on hearing about the participants' negotiation behavior from someone else who had negotiated with the participant – rather than on, say, possessing knowledge of the participant prior to class. Therefore, after classmates nominated a participant, they were asked whether they based their nomination on direct negotiation experience with the participant, on hearing about the participants' negotiation behavior from someone else, or for other reasons. We only counted the nomination if it was based on the first two sources of information. We again gave participants a point if a classmate nominated them along any of the three categories, but did not give participants additional points if the same person nominated them for more than one category. We then summed the number of different nominations each participant

received in any of these categories to form an overall measure of reputation for cooperativeness,  $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 2.05$ .

*Reputation for selfishness.* We also asked participants to nominate their classmates along two categories related to selfishness: their aggressiveness in fighting for their own outcomes (“Who are the most aggressive negotiators?”) and their lack of trustworthiness (“Who are the most likely to stretch ethical boundaries?”). We again only counted the nomination if it was based on direct experience negotiating with the participant or on hearing about the participants’ negotiation behavior from someone else, and again did not give participants additional points if the same person nominated them for more than one category. We summed the number of different nominations each participant received in either of these categories to form an overall measure of reputation for selfishness,  $M = 1.41$ ,  $SD = 2.19$ . Also, as in Study 1, we again tested our hypotheses with raw reputation scores and the square root of reputation scores (Judd & McClelland, 1989). No findings changed in any meaningful way, so we report analyses using raw scores.

### *Results*

We first examined whether socially visible individuals were more likely to gain a reputation of any kind, in terms of the total number of nominations they received for either being cooperative or selfish. There was a robust relation between social visibility and the total number of nominations received,  $r(39) = .57$ ,  $p < .01$ . Moreover, this effect held up for both reputations for cooperativeness,  $r(39) = .42$ ,  $p < .01$ , and for selfishness,  $r(39) = .30$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, visible individuals were more likely to develop a positive reputation and a negative reputation. We then broke down individuals’ reputations into

their firsthand reputation and secondhand reputation. Visible individuals were more likely to develop a firsthand reputation,  $r(39) = .54, p < .01$ , suggesting that they were more likely to be remembered by their negotiation counterparts as being cooperative or selfish. Visible individuals were also more likely to develop a secondhand reputation,  $r(39) = .34, p < .05$ , suggesting that their negotiation counterparts were also more likely to talk about them to others. Therefore, visible individuals were much more likely to develop both a positive and a negative reputation, and both a firsthand and secondhand reputation.

### Study 3: The Interaction between Behavior and Visibility and the Role of Personality

We had two primary aims in Study 3. First, we have shown in Studies 1 and 2 that individuals' reputations were a product of their history of behavior and their visibility, respectively. In Study 3 we tested whether these two factors interact in predicting reputation. Specifically, we hypothesized that the relation between individuals' behavior history and their reputation would be stronger for more visible individuals than for less visible individuals. If supported, this hypothesis would provide more direct evidence that communities pay more attention to and scrutinize visible individuals' behavior.

Our second aim was to examine the origins of behavior history. If individuals' reputations are based on their history of behavior, where does their history of behavior originate? Is there simply random variation in individuals' interactions with others, with some individuals accumulating a history of more positive interactions and others accumulating a history of more negative interactions? Or are individuals' histories of behavior a product of their internal personality characteristics? In line with other work

(e.g., Buss & Craik, 1983; Epstein, 1979; Fleenon, 2001), we argue that individuals' behavior over long stretches of time reflects their internal, stable personality traits. Therefore, the level of cooperativeness an individual exhibits across many interactions should relate to their personality traits.

We tested this hypothesis in Study 3 by focusing specifically on agreeableness, one of the Big Five personality dimensions (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997; John & Srivastava, 1999). The agreeableness dimension includes specific personality traits such as altruism, trust, modesty, and a tender-minded concern for others. It is the personality dimension most closely associated with cooperative behavior and pro-social motives (John & Srivastava, 1999), and specifically with cooperative behavior in conflict situations (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996; Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). We wanted to examine agreeableness, rather than more targeted measures of conflict-resolution styles (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) to connect our findings to the Big Five literature and to show that behavior in negotiations is a product of broader personality dimensions, not just conflict-resolution styles more specifically.

As Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2001) argued, the link between agreeableness and social behavior is not well understood, as researchers have examined more thoroughly the social outcomes of extraversion and neuroticism. Moreover, although agreeableness should be highly relevant to negotiation situations, very little research has examined this link. Two studies of conflict situations found that agreeableness was related to the use of cooperative tactics, viewing one's opponent more favorably, and experiencing less anger (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996; Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). We build from those findings by showing that agreeableness is related

to cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes in bargaining situations more broadly, not just in emotion-laden conflict situations that can threaten interpersonal relationships.

Demonstrating a link between individuals' agreeableness and their behavior across negotiation contexts would also potentially shed light on a vexing issue in the negotiations literature. Negotiation scholars have failed to find consistent evidence for personality in bargaining contexts (cf. Barry & Friedman, 1998; Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Neale & Northcraft, 1991; Thompson, 1990). For example, studies have found conflicting effects for the same trait (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996) and have obtained weak or null effects across many studies (see Thompson, 1990). One reason for this inconsistency might be that prior work on negotiations correlated negotiators' personality traits with their behavior in single negotiations – and as prior work has shown, these correlations are bound to be low. However, when individuals' behavior is considered in aggregate, across negotiations, personality should play a stronger role. For example, in one very relevant study, Barry & Friedman (1998) found that agreeableness was unrelated to integrative outcomes; however, they focused on a single negotiation interaction, rather individuals' outcomes across multiple negotiations.

### *Methods*

*Participants.* Participants were 39 Masters of Business Administration students (79% male, 21% female) in a semester-long negotiation class at a large business school. The business school is comprised of 36% minority students; the average age is 29.

*Procedure.* We measured individuals' visibility and also their personality at the beginning of the class, before any negotiation exercises were conducted. As in Studies 1 and 2, participants engaged in a series of negotiation exercises, each exercise on a

different week. Participants were randomly assigned to their opponents and into negotiation roles; in a very small number of cases did participants face an opponent they faced in a prior week. For our measure of behavior histories we focused on the seven negotiation exercises that were dyadic or triadic; three other exercises involved larger groups, which made measuring counterparts' perceptions impractical. Four of the negotiation exercises were the same as those used in Study 1. The other three negotiations involved a dyadic negotiation between a job recruiter and candidate (Neale, 1997), the sale of a housing development (Karp, 1995), and the mediation of a conflict between a supervisor and supervisor by their manager (Schroth & Riding, 1997). Again, following each exercise, participants reported their negotiated agreements and then privately reported their perceptions of their counterparts. At the end of the course we measured individuals' reputations for cooperativeness and selfishness through peer nominations.

*Agreeableness.* To measure individuals' agreeableness, we used the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999); the BFI is a widely used and well-validated measure of the Big Five personality dimensions, its scales have shown substantial internal consistency, retest reliability, and clear factor structure, as well as considerable convergent and discriminant validity (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; John & Srivastava, 1999). For the Agreeableness scale, participants rated how much they agreed with nine statements such as, "I see myself as someone who likes to cooperate with others," and "I see myself as someone who is helpful and unselfish with others," on a scale from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). These items correlated with each other,

coefficient alpha = .71, and were thus combined into one measure of trait cooperativeness,  $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = .53$ .

*Social visibility.* Participants rated every other classmate on how well they knew them on a scale from 0 (“Do not know this person”) to 7 (“Know this person very well”). Therefore, each participant received 38 peer-ratings. These ratings were reliable, coefficient alpha = .78, indicating some individuals were generally better known and socially visible than others. We averaged the rating assigned to participants to form an overall measure of social visibility,  $M = 2.34$  ( $SD = .72$ ). Men ( $M = 2.48$ ) were more visible than women ( $M = 1.79$ ),  $t(37) = 2.57$ ,  $p < .05$ .

*Individuals' behavior in the negotiations.* After each negotiation exercise, participants rated how much their counterparts considered the participant's wishes, opinions, or needs; how sympathetic the counterpart was to the participant's concerns and cared about the participant's interests; and whether the counterpart behaved in trustworthy ways. These three items showed high reliability within each week, average coefficient alpha = .87 across weeks. We thus combined them to form one measure of cooperative behavior for each week. We then averaged these combined measures across weeks to form an overall measure of individuals' cooperative behavior,  $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = .63$ . As in Study 1, there was not high consistency across weeks in participants' cooperative behavior, coefficient alpha = -.03.

*Integrative negotiation outcomes.* For the four negotiation exercises used in Study 1, we coded participants' integrative outcomes the same way we did in Study 1, and used the same coders. For the negotiation that involved the sale of a biotechnology plant, we again did not code participants' integrative outcomes.

For the negotiation between a job recruiter and candidate, participants' role materials described eight negotiable issues, each of differing importance; importance was reflected in how many points the issue was worth. The issues were broken up into three types, distributive, tradable, and compatible. Negotiator's own outcomes were scored by adding the points they obtained across the eight issues; the average was 5533.33 ( $SD = 1775.07$ ). To measure how integrative agreements were, we again focused on the commonly used index of joint outcome, or the sum of dyad member's own outcomes. Coding participants' integrative outcomes in the negotiation over the housing development or in the mediation of a conflict between a supervisor and supervisor by their manager was impractical. For the former, although some integrative issues could be added to the deal, they would only be added at the expense of the seller, thus reducing the seller's gains (see Karp, 1995). For the latter, it was unclear how to code the integrative outcome of a mediator, who was not party to the conflict itself. Even with these agreements excluded from our overall measure, we hoped the overall measure would be reliable enough to predict negotiator reputations.

We created aggregate scores for integrative outcomes across weeks by standardizing each participant's integrative score in each negotiation and then averaging those standardized scores,  $M = -.01$ ,  $SD = .49$ . Higher scores indicate achieving more integrative outcomes across the negotiations. Participants' integrative outcomes were significantly related to their cooperative behavior,  $r = .37$ ,  $p < .05$ .

*Distributive negotiation outcomes.* For the negotiation exercises that we used in Study 1, we coded participants' distributive outcomes the same way, using the same coders. For the negotiation between a job recruiter and candidate, we calculated the



proportion of the joint value captured by the participant, so that the integrative and distributive outcomes would be unconfounded.

We created aggregate scores for distributive outcomes across weeks by standardizing each participant's distributive score in each negotiation and averaging those standardized scores,  $M = .02$ ,  $SD = .49$ . Participants' distributive outcomes were not significantly related to their cooperative behavior,  $r = -.10$ .

*Reputation for cooperativeness.* Participants were asked to nominate their classmates along three categories related to cooperativeness: "Who were most trustworthy negotiators in the class?", "Who were the most gentle-hearted and sympathetic negotiators?", and "Who would you want on your side in any given negotiation?" As in Study 2, after classmates nominated a participant, they were asked whether they based their nomination on direct negotiation experience with the participant, on hearing about the participants' negotiation behavior from someone else, or for other reasons. We only counted the nomination if it was based on the first two sources of information. We again gave participants a point if a classmate nominated them along any of the three categories, but did not give participants additional points if the same person nominated them for more than one category. We then summed the number of different nominations each participant received in any of these categories to form an overall measure of reputation for cooperativeness,  $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 2.75$ .

*Reputation for selfishness.* We also asked participants to nominate their classmates along three categories related to selfishness: "Who were the most ruthless negotiators in the class?", "Who were the most aggressive negotiators?", and "Who were the most likely to stretch ethical boundaries?" We again only counted the nomination if it

was based on direct experience negotiating with the participant or on hearing about the participants' negotiation behavior from someone else. We summed the number of different nominations each participant received in any of these categories to form an overall measure of reputation for selfishness,  $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 4.12$ . Men ( $M = 3.42$ ) were more likely than women ( $M = .25$ ) to gain a reputation for selfishness,  $t(37) = 1.99$ ,  $p = .05$ . Therefore we controlled for sex when predicting reputations.

### *Results*

*Counterpart-rated cooperativeness.* Consistent with Study 1, participants' cooperative behavior predicted their overall reputation for cooperativeness ( $B = 1.44$ ,  $SE = .69$ ,  $p < .05$ ), after controlling for sex ( $B = .51$ ,  $SE = 1.07$ , *n.s.*). Participants' cooperative behavior also negatively related to their overall reputation for selfishness ( $B = -3.39$ ,  $SE = .90$ ,  $p < .01$ ), after controlling for sex ( $B = -2.19$ ,  $SE = 1.40$ , *n.s.*). Thus individuals who behaved more cooperatively were more likely to gain a positive reputation and also less likely to gain a negative reputation.

These findings also held up for both firsthand and secondhand reputations. Cooperative behavior predicted firsthand reputations for cooperativeness ( $B = 1.81$ ,  $SE = .54$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and secondhand reputations for cooperativeness ( $B = .36$ ,  $SE = .20$ ,  $p < .10$ ), although the latter effect was marginally significant. Cooperative behavior also predicted firsthand reputations for selfishness ( $B = -1.78$ ,  $SE = .45$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and secondhand reputations for selfishness ( $B = -1.61$ ,  $SE = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, individuals who behaved more cooperatively were more likely to develop better a reputation because their opponents remembered them and told others about them.

*Objective outcomes.* Participants' integrative outcomes predicted their reputation for being cooperative ( $B = 2.25, SE = .87, p = .01$ ), after controlling for sex ( $B = .28, SE = 1.05, n.s.$ ). Participants' integrative outcomes did not predict their reputations for selfishness however ( $B = -.93, SE = 1.34, n.s.$ ), after controlling for sex ( $B = -2.90, SE = 1.65, n.s.$ ). Therefore, it seems that integrative outcomes were tied more to positive reputations than negative reputations. Individuals who achieved more integrative outcomes were more likely to develop a positive reputation; however, achieving integrative outcomes did not necessarily shield them from developing a negative reputation. Moreover, the relation between integrative outcomes and cooperative reputations held up for both firsthand ( $B = 1.48, SE = .70, p < .05$ ) and secondhand ( $B = .77, SE = .24, p < .01$ ) reputations. Similar to Study 1, we found no effect of distributive outcomes achieved on reputations. Distributive outcomes did not predict reputations for cooperativeness ( $B = .15, SE = .95, n.s.$ ) or reputations for selfishness ( $B = 1.43, SE = 1.36, n.s.$ ). Reputations seem more based on integrative than distributive outcomes.

*Social visibility.* Consistent with Study 2, we found that social visibility predicted reputations for cooperativeness ( $B = 1.70, SE = .62, p < .01$ ) after controlling for sex ( $B = 2.09, SE = 1.09, n.s.$ ). Visibility also predicted negative reputations ( $B = 2.37, SE = .91, p = .01$ ) after controlling for sex ( $B = -1.54, SE = 1.61, n.s.$ ). Moreover, these effects held up for firsthand and secondhand reputations. More visible individuals were more likely to gain a firsthand reputation for cooperativeness ( $B = 1.10, SE = .50, p < .05$ ) and secondhand reputation for cooperativeness ( $B = .60, SE = .17, p < .01$ ). They were also more likely to gain a firsthand reputation for selfishness ( $B = 1.17, SE = .47, p = .01$ ) and a secondhand reputation for selfishness ( $B = 1.20, SE = .46, p = .01$ ).

One possibility was that visible individuals were more likely to establish a reputation because they behaved in more consistent ways across negotiations than visible individuals. Visible individuals might have behaved consistently cooperatively or consistently selfishly, for example, whereas less visible individuals might have changed their behavior from negotiation to negotiation. We found no support for this possibility, however. There was not consistency across weeks in less visible individuals' cooperative behavior, coefficient alpha = -.04, or in more visible individuals' cooperative behavior, coefficient alpha = -.03. There was also not consistency across weeks in less visible individuals' integrative outcomes, coefficient alpha = .03, or in more visible individuals' integrative outcomes, coefficient alpha = .00.

*Interaction effects.* Were the links between cooperative behavior and reputations stronger for individuals who were more socially visible? To test this question we used moderated multiple regression analyses (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). We predicted individuals' reputation for cooperativeness with their sex ( $B = 2.11$ ,  $SE = 1.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ), cooperative behavior ( $B = .73$ ,  $SE = .38$ ,  $p < .10$ ), visibility ( $B = 1.20$ ,  $SE = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and their interaction, ( $B = 1.16$ ,  $SE = .48$ ,  $p < .05$ ). We next predicted individuals' reputation for selfishness with their sex ( $B = -1.28$ ,  $SE = 1.23$ , *n.s.*), cooperative behavior ( $B = -1.84$ ,  $SE = .47$ ,  $p < .01$ ), visibility ( $B = 1.77$ ,  $SE = .49$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and their interaction, ( $B = -1.89$ ,  $SE = .59$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Both interaction effects were significant. These interaction effects are also illustrated in Figures 1a and 1b. As shown in Figure 1a, the steeper slopes for more visible negotiators indicates that they developed positive reputations more easily when they behaved cooperatively. At the same time, as

shown in Figure 1b, the steeper slope for more visible negotiators indicates that they also developed negative reputations more easily when they behaved selfishly.

These interaction effects also held up for both firsthand and secondhand reputations. For reputations for cooperativeness, the interaction terms were ( $B = .85$ ,  $SE = .41$ ,  $p < .05$ ) for firsthand reputations and ( $B = .31$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ) for secondhand reputations. For reputations for selfishness, the interaction terms were ( $B = -.87$ ,  $SE = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for firsthand reputations and ( $B = -1.02$ ,  $SE = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for secondhand reputations.

The effect of negotiators' integrative outcomes on their reputations for cooperativeness was also moderated by participant visibility, although this effect was marginally significant. We predicted cooperative reputation with sex ( $B = 2.00$ ,  $SE = 1.12$ ,  $n.s.$ ), integrative outcomes ( $B = .68$ ,  $SE = .42$ ,  $n.s.$ ), visibility ( $B = 1.04$ ,  $SE = .43$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and their interaction, ( $B = .90$ ,  $SE = .47$ ,  $p = .06$ ). Thus at a marginally significant level, the more visible the individual, the more likely his or her integrative outcomes would result in a positive reputation for cooperativeness.

*The effects of agreeableness.* If individuals' behavior history predicted their eventual reputations, what in turn predicted their history of behavior? We next examined the hypothesis that trait agreeableness shaped individuals' histories of behavior. Individuals' trait agreeableness did predict their cooperative behavior,  $r(39) = .30$ ,  $p < .05$ , and predicted their integrative outcomes,  $r(39) = .40$ ,  $p < .05$ . It did not predict their distributive outcomes however,  $r(39) = -.09$ ,  $n.s.$  These findings indicate that more agreeable individuals in fact behaved more cooperatively in these negotiations, and they achieved higher integrative outcomes. This finding is important not only because it sheds

light on the origins of individuals' history of behavior, but also because it suggests one reason why previous research has often failed to find effects for negotiator personality: namely, researchers typically examine negotiator behavior in a single bargaining context, rather than over time.

To demonstrate the unique relation between agreeableness and cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes, we also examined how well the other Big Five dimensions (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) predicted those two outcomes as a secondary analysis. None of those correlations were significant. On average, the correlation between the other Big Five dimensions and cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes were  $r = -.09$ , and  $r = .06$ , respectively. This suggests that cooperative behavior and integrative outcomes were uniquely linked to agreeableness.

### General Discussion

Our overarching aim in the current study was to examine the origins of reputation. Using a multi-method approach we found that reputations were a product of both individuals' history of behavior and of their visibility among peers. Specifically, we found a main effect for behavior, in that individuals who behaved in more cooperative ways developed a reputation of being more cooperative and those who behaved in more selfish ways developed a reputation of being more selfish. We also found a main effect of visibility, in that individuals who were visible among their peers (i.e., those who were more widely known) developed reputations more easily than individuals who were not. Further, we found that visibility moderated the link between behavior and reputation: when individuals were more visible, their behavior history had a stronger effect on their

reputation. Finally, we found that individuals' trait agreeableness predicted their behavior history, suggesting that individuals' cooperative behavior ultimately originated in their personality.

The data had many strengths; it involved diverse types of measures from multiple sources, including peer-reports of behavior in negotiations, objective bargaining outcomes, peer-ratings of visibility, peer-nomination measures of reputation, and self-reports of personality. Moreover, the data were extensive. Study 1 involved 160 separate negotiations and over 5 hours of data collection per participant, and Study 3 involved 133 separate negotiation interactions and over 8 hours of data collection per participant. One limitation to the data is that it involved MBA students in negotiations classes, which might have reduced the generalizability of the findings. For example, students in these classes were able to observe each other's objective negotiation outcomes as they were publicly displayed on the classroom whiteboard. Therefore, the classroom setting might have increased the likelihood of individuals developing a reputation based on their history of behaviors, because such outcomes were immediately made public.

We did find that individuals' reputations were predicted by their counterparts' perceptions of their behavior even after controlling for their objective negotiated outcome, which would suggest that our findings were not simply due to a "whiteboard effect." We also measured reputation in Studies 2 and 3 by using only nominations based on firsthand negotiation experience and secondhand knowledge; therefore, reputations were not based on comments made during classroom discussions in those studies. Nonetheless, future research should examine the development of reputations in non-classroom environments.

*Implications for the Study of Reputation*

Our findings contribute to a number of literatures. Perhaps most important, they contribute to the small but growing body of research on reputation (Bromley, 1993; Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Flynn, 2003; Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998). Many theorists have argued that reputations serve social functions. For example, they help individuals garner information about others, reward pro-social behavior, and punish anti-social behavior. Our findings suggest that reputations do serve these functions, but perhaps more effectively for some individuals than others. Specifically, community members are more likely to find out information about the visible individuals than they are about less visible individuals. Also, reputations might be more rewarding and punishing for visible individuals than they are for less visible individuals.

On a broader level, our findings suggest that reputation development is a much more complex and interesting process than many current economic models of reputation might imply. That is, economic models have often suggested that information about individuals is transferred efficiently among community members, and that reputation development is a uniform process across individuals and groups; for example, if one community member behaves unethically, all other community members will find out about it. But given limitations in human attention, person perception processes, and information exchange, reputation systems are far from perfectly efficient.

Given the complexity of reputation formation, we believe psychological factors play a major role in determining how and when individuals establish reputations. Individuals do not objectively record others' behavior and perfectly retain that information over time, nor do they perfectly accurately convey information about



individuals to others. Their perceptions and memories of others are likely shaped by processes such as attraction, stereotyping, liking, shared group membership, social motives, and so on. Further, psychological processes that play out within targets are likely to play a major role in determining their reputation, such as their level of self-monitoring, need for belongingness, self-perceptions, or status striving.

If psychological processes likely play a role in reputation development, why have psychologists avoided the study of reputation? As we suggested at the beginning of the paper, it might be due to the difficulties in collecting appropriate data. Reputations are best studied in communities that exist for extended periods of time and allow members to share information about each other, rather than in short-term groups of strangers. Moreover, studying the behavioral origins of reputation ideally involves tracking individuals' behavior across many interactions. Thus, the time and effort involved in studying reputation development are considerable. However, given the unique knowledge and methodological paradigms that psychologists can bring to the study of this topic, we hope they investigate it more fully in the future.

#### *Implications for the Study of Negotiation*

Our findings also contribute to the field of negotiations. As previous work has shown, reputations are very important to negotiators' success, in terms of obtaining willing bargaining partners (Glick & Croson, 2001; Millinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002), and achieving better bargaining outcomes (Tinsley, O'Connor, & Sullivan, 2002). Therefore, students of negotiation are often exhorted to behave cooperatively out of concern for their reputation (Lewicki, Saunders, Minton, & Barry, 2003; Thompson, 1998; Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991). However, to our knowledge no previous study has

examined whether negotiators' behavior can actually affect their reputation. The current studies provide empirical support for this argument that behavior does in fact impact reputation; it also suggests that the story is slightly more nuanced. Specifically, it suggests that negotiators should be particularly careful about their behavior when they are visible among their peers.

Moreover, a particularly puzzling issue within the negotiations literature has been whether or not personality plays an important role in negotiator behavior and outcomes (cf. Barry & Friedman, 1998; Neale & Northcraft, 1991). The body of work on personality and negotiations is a somewhat jumbled mess, with many contradictory and null findings. Our findings suggest, however, that past studies may have obtained such inconsistent results because they examined the effects of personality on negotiators' behavior in single bargaining contexts. As research has shown (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Epstein, 1979; Fleeson, 2001), personality is typically a poor predictor of behavior in a single situation. However, when behavior is considered in aggregate or over long stretches of time, personality shows high predictive utility. We hope that the current findings spur future negotiation scholars to measure individuals' behavior across negotiations when examining the effects of personality.

#### *Implications for the Study of Personality*

Finally, the current findings also contribute to research and theory on personality. One critical goal for personality scholars is to understand the social outcomes of personality (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Here we show that individuals' stable patterns of behavior, which stemmed from their agreeableness, shaped their reputations in communities. Linking agreeableness in particular to social behavior and outcomes is

important because it builds to our limited knowledge of how agreeable people interact with the social world. Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2001) argued that agreeableness is the least understood Big Five dimension, and that the social outcomes of agreeableness have been particularly neglected by personality psychologists; much more research has examined the effects of extraversion or neuroticism on social behavior. Therefore, the current findings help fill an important gap in the literature. We show that agreeableness provides a profound benefit to individuals, namely a cooperative reputation, which should help them succeed in social, organizational, and economic arenas.

Given the ubiquity and importance of reputation to different theories of personality (Buss, 1999; Hogan, 1982; 1996), it is surprising that more studies of personality and reputation have not been done. As Hogan (1996) argued, “Allport (1937) dismissed reputations as a ‘peripheral’ issue in personality psychology – he believed personality psychology was about intrapsychic order rather than interpersonal processes. But a person’s reputation is a central part of his or her personality; much of what people do each day involves protecting their reputations – and it really matters” (p. 166). The very organization and structure of personality is related to the human desire for a positive reputation (Buss, 1999; Hogan, 1996). Thus reputation is a ripe and important topic for research in personality psychology.

## Footnotes

1. Studies by Sternberg and colleagues even provide preliminary evidence that individual behavior is stable across in conflict situations (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Sterberg & Soriano, 1984). They found consistency in subjects' ratings of how appropriate various conflict resolution strategies were in hypothetical conflict situations, and in subjects' self-reported use of various resolution strategies in past conflicts. Of course, these findings should be taken with caution, as the observed consistency might have been due to biases in memory or in self-report response styles.

2. Individuals' outcomes in negotiations can also be evaluated in terms of distributive performance – that is, how well individuals' secured resources for themselves (e.g., Thompson, 1990). However, the potential effects of distributive outcomes on reputation were less clear. On the one hand, individuals who achieve high distributive outcomes might develop reputations as being less cooperative. High distributive outcomes are often the product of assertive and forceful bargaining tactics (Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001; Thompson, 1990). On the other hand, individuals who achieve low distributive gains are not necessarily more cooperative, but instead simply be poor distributive bargainers; this would suggests no relation between distributive outcomes and reputations. We left this as an open research question.

3. There were two additional negotiation exercises in the course that we excluded from analyses. These were both group-based negotiations and we did not collect opponent-perception data. We hoped that the first four negotiations would provide a reliable measure of negotiators' history of interactions.

4. There was also an additional aspect of this case, such as a potential for a bonus if the show were to perform better than expectations, but because such a contract involves value transfer and not value creation, we did not focus on whether there were contingencies included in the final agreement.

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Figure 1a

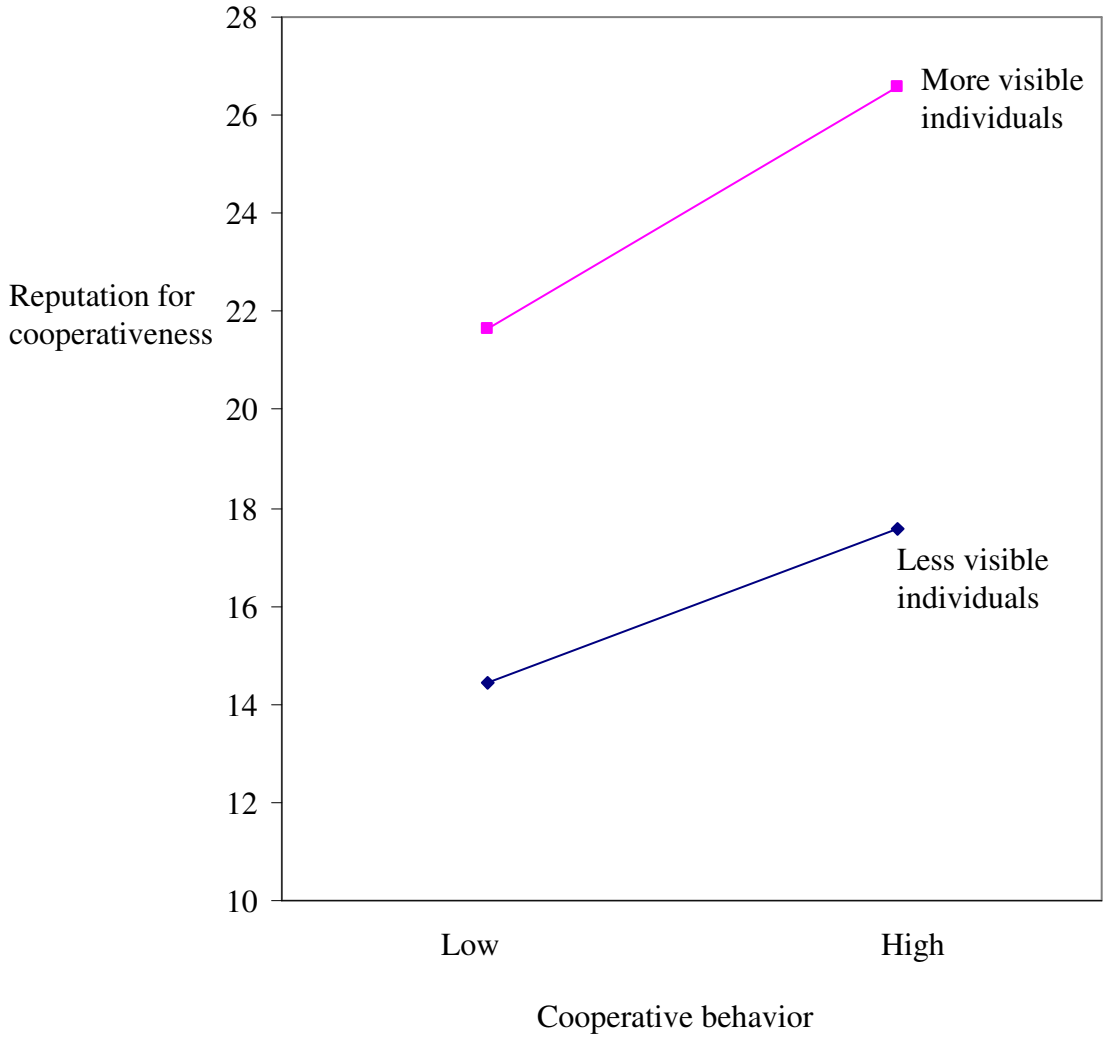
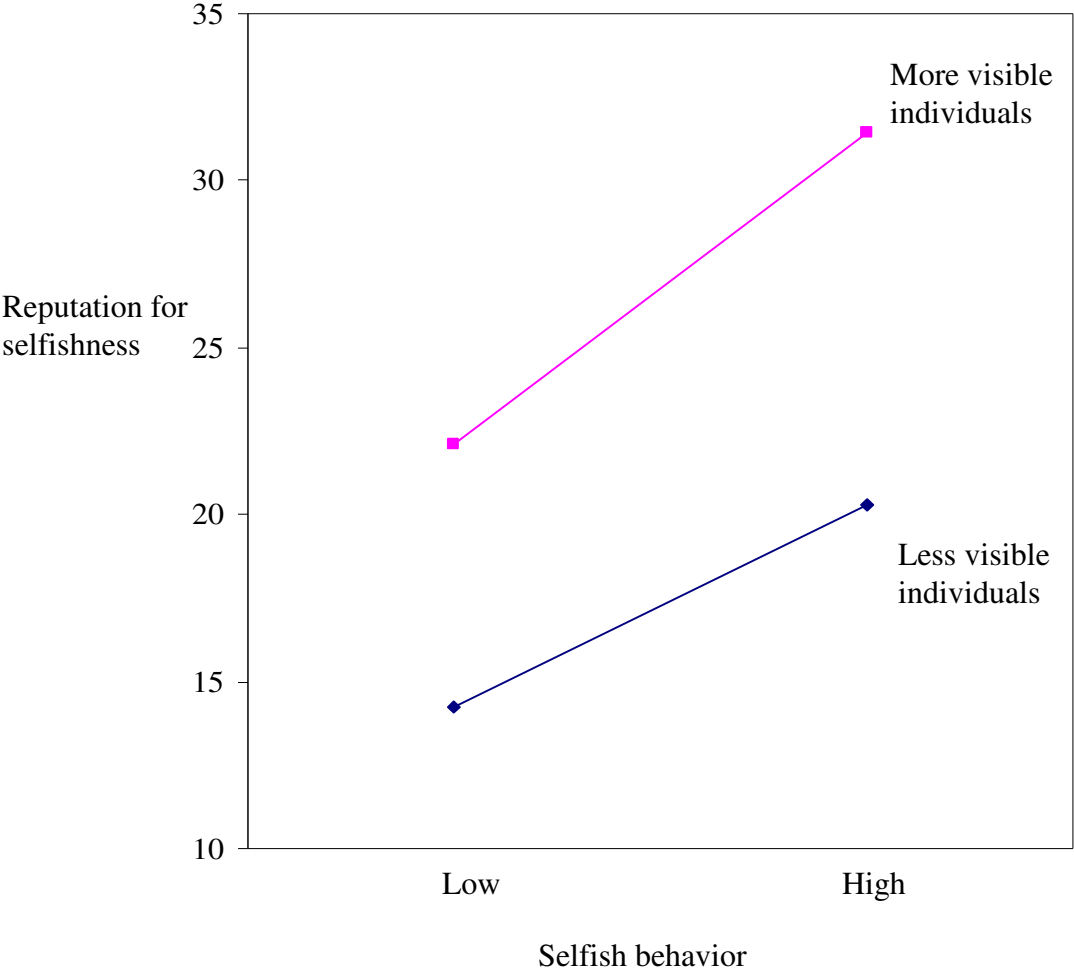


Figure 1b





### Figure Captions

Figure 1a. More visible negotiators were more likely to gain a reputation for being cooperative when they behaved cooperatively, as compared to less visible negotiators.

Figure 1b. More visible negotiators were more likely to gain a reputation for being selfish when they behaved selfishly, as compared to less visible negotiators. For illustrative purposes, we reversed cooperative-behavior scores, such that higher scores reflect being more selfish.