The Dark Side of Rapport: Agent Misbehavior Face-to-Face and Online

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A considerable body of research has extolled the virtues of establishing rapport in negotiations. Negotiators who are high in rapport tend to be more likely to reach an agreement and more satisfied with the outcome. Although rapport generally has been found to have positive effects in standard negotiation settings, we investigate the effects of rapport in impasse settings, where conflict between negotiators' core needs means that a successful deal can only be reached when one or both parties acts unethically or "misbehaves," for example, by lying to the negotiation partner. In a series of three experiments, we find that negotiators who have a high level of rapport are more likely to behave unethically than are negotiators who have a low level of rapport. We find this effect holds both when high rapport results from the way in which negotiations are conducted (face-to-face versus computer mediated) and also when rapport is established through a brief rapport-building exercise before negotiations begin. Finally, we find that the negative effects (unethical behavior)—but not the positive effects (satisfaction with the negotiation, trust, and willingness to work in the future with the negotiation partner)—of high rapport are reduced when negotiators are given a simple reminder before negotiations begin that one's actions can have long-term repercussions for one's reputation. Taken together, this research supports the idea that, despite its several advantages, in certain situations rapport has a dark side, of which negotiators must be wary.

Key words: buyer–seller interactions; misbehavior; unethical behavior; rapport; emotion; online media; lying; misleading; overpromising
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In a negotiation process, the relationship among the negotiators is as important as the substance of the negotiation.

(Fisher and Shapiro 2005, p. 190)

One of the significant changes in the study of negotiations in recent decades has been a shift from viewing these interactions as largely adversarial, in which one party typically gains an advantage at the expense of the other, to more congenial affairs, in which both parties not only come to a place that is mutually acceptable, but they do so happily. A key insight from this approach is that when negotiating, there are advantages to building rapport with the person across the table. Rapport is generally thought to be critical to concluding a successful negotiation (Moore et al. 1999, Nadler 2004). Changing the tone from adversarial to collegial allows the cultivation of positive emotions and the reduction of fear and suspicion. Negotiations that do not produce a successful outcome are often characterized by a sense of competing interests, lack of understanding of the partner's point of view, and suspicion of the partner's motives. If negotiating partners can establish rapport, they are more likely to trust each other and to be willing to cooperate to reach an outcome that is satisfactory to both. They are also less likely to have to resort to threats and ultimatums (Nadler 2004). Once a sense of rapport is achieved, both parties are willing to entertain the point of view of the other and come to a mutual understanding. Further, negotiators who build rapport can gauge the emotional needs of their counterparts and set the emotional tone (Fisher and Shapiro 2005).

Although the general objective of a negotiation is to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome, there are some situations in which the underlying values of the negotiators are so divergent that a deal can only be concluded through the unethical behavior

(e.g., deception) of one or both parties. How does rapport influence the propensity for misbehavior in these impasse negotiations? Previous research suggests that rapport and its correlates, such as empathy, positive affect, and perspective-taking, would lead to fewer unethical acts in negotiations (Dutton et al. 2006, Fitness 2000). In contrast to the conventional wisdom, we propose that rapport can actually *increase* unethical behavior in negotiations when misbehavior facilitates reaching an agreement. This has particular relevance to impasse negotiations or negotiations that occur in a negative bargaining zone, where differences cannot be successfully forged to create a deal that serves both parties. Our proposal would imply that in situations of impasse when negotiators should forego an agreement, those with a high level of rapport might instead make a deal, even if it incurs an ethical cost.

In this paper, we examine the intersection of negotiation theory, agency theory, ethics, and communication media. First, our work allows researchers interested in agent interactions to better see the dark side of rapport, when relational demands detract from the focus on client interests. Second, it contributes to research on ethics in organizations by situating ethical action within a demanding interpersonal context and examining the relational facilitators of actual (versus self-reported intentions or simulated) misbehavior. Third, we examine the effects of rapport on negotiations in the context of communication settings (face-to-face and computer-mediated negotiations) that are of immediate interest to organization theorists, given the increased prevalence of computer-mediated negotiations of all types.

We test the prediction that increased rapport can lead to increased ethical lapses in three experiments. Participants in our studies, including undergraduate business students, MBA students, and executives taking a course in negotiations, engaged in dyadic negotiations in which they represented clients with divergent values. Across studies, we found that participants in high rapport situations were more likely to behave unethically than were those in low rapport situations. Experiment 1 establishes the effect and shows evidence of the different components of rapport. Experiment 2 replicates the basic finding; it provides additional evidence for the causal role of rapport and rules out an alternative account for the effect based on cognitive load. Specifically, we manipulate rapport while holding the communication mode and sequence constant and find causal evidence of the role of rapport in encouraging misbehavior. Finally, in Experiment 3, we explore potential moderators of the influence of rapport on misbehavior and demonstrate how to retain the benefits of rapport such as trust, satisfaction, and willingness to work together again

in the future while removing its dark side effects (i.e., misbehavior).

Theoretical Development

Rapport and Negotiations
Colloquially, rapport describes a relationship characterized by a high degree of sympathy, accord, and cooperation. More rigorously, Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) decompose rapport into three factors. The first is positivity or positive affect, an umbrella term that covers a variety of more discrete emotions along with a general positive feeling (Barsade and Gibson 2007). Positive affect itself is linked to a wide range of outcomes in organizations, such as increasing work performance, creativity, teamwork, and negotiation agreement (Amabile et al. 2005, Barsade and Gibson 2007, Kopelman et al. 2006, Mayer et al. 2008). The second component of rapport is mutual attentiveness, which involves the focus of attention on the interaction partner and involvement with the partner. The third component of rapport is coordination, or being "in sync," which refers to a sense of balance or harmony in the relationship. Equilibrium is achieved through the regularity and predictability of the other's responses.

Rapport is fundamental to communication (Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal 1990) and foundational to the development of trust (Ross and Wieland 1996), respect (Beach et al. 2006), and cooperation (Drolet and Morris 2000, Morris et al. 2002). Given its importance to all forms of interpersonal communication, it is perhaps not surprising that rapport is also thought to facilitate successful negotiations (Fisher and Shapiro 2005). Indeed, a lack of rapport has been shown to lead to failures in interactions (Bruner and Spekman 1998, Thompson and Nadler 2002, Planken 2005).

Rapport is built not just by what negotiation partners say but also how they say it—and even by what is not said at all. Eye contact, tone of voice, posture, and facial expression add to the richness of the content of what is actually being said and enable agents to gauge more accurately the mutual attention, positivity, and coordination that make up rapport (Bagozzi et al. 2007, Ekman 1993, Spencer-Oatey 2000, Sorce et al. 1985, Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal 1990). The importance of nonverbal cues is illustrated dramatically in research demonstrating that the level of rapport in an interaction can be judged reliably without even hearing the conversation. Observing facial expressions and body language as two people hold a conversation (without knowing what they are saying) can provide an assessment of rapport consistent with self-reports by the conversing individuals (Bernieri et al. 1994).

Because of the importance of nonverbal communications in establishing rapport, different modes of negotiation could be expected to result in different levels of rapport. In particular, face-to-face negotiations facilitate rapport to a greater extent than do negotiations conducted in a computer-mediated, online environment. Research to date has shown that the capacity for rapport and relational development declines when interactions are mediated by technology. This decline is because of a reduced ability to discern verbal and nonverbal cues important in understanding affective phenomena (Drolet and Morris 2000; Gittel 2001, 2003; Moore et al. 1999; Thompson and Nadler 2002). Consistent with this view, electronic media have been found to lead to a sense of depersonalization (Straus and McGrath 1994), which can impede the development of rapport.

Rapport and Unethical Behavior in Negotiations

There are various ways that negotiation partners can compromise themselves ethically, but for the purposes of this research, we will focus on two broad types of misbehavior: misbehavior toward the negotiation partner and misbehavior toward the client. We propose that increased rapport can cause an increase in both types. We further propose that although there is a similar behavioral outcome—increased unethical behavior—there are different reasons for rapport to influence each type of misbehavior.

Misbehavior Toward Negotiation Partner. Misbehavior directed toward the negotiation partner can range from dissembling, overpromising, or omitting important information to outright deception and lying. The conventional view is that increased rapport, such as that facilitated through face-to-face communication, leads to a higher incidence of ethical behavior (Naquin and Paulson 2003). Valley et al. (1998) found that individuals negotiating face-to-face are more likely to tell the truth than are those negotiating either by telephone or in writing, in part because people believe that it is more costly to the relationship to lie face-to-face. Face-to-face encounters seem to prime social norms of honesty and a positive relational atmosphere (Bazerman et al. 2000, DePaulo et al. 1996, Naquin and Paulson 2003).

In contrast to the conventional view, we propose that *in some circumstances rapport can lead to an increase in deceiving the negotiation partner*. At the core of our argument is the notion that sometimes negotiating involves giving the negotiation partner bad news—information that is contrary to the partner's preferences and could jeopardize coming to a successful deal. This negative information represents a psychological conflict for a negotiator who is trying to build or maintain a high level of rapport. Building rapport often involves seeking out areas of agreement, whereas sharing information that the partner does not like can result in conflict. Thus, we predict that when a negotiation involves core requirements that are in conflict, negotiators seeking to build or maintain rapport may be more likely to deceive their partners than to disappoint them with the truth.

This prediction may be reconciled with the conventional view that rapport decreases lying by noting that previous research has primarily focused on negotiations within a positive bargaining zone, in other words, negotiations with a low likelihood of reaching an impasse (Hancock et al. 2004). Recognizing that long-term rapport is more likely to be fostered in truthful interactions, previous research has found that people in these low conflict negotiations are, in general, less likely to lie when they are motivated to build rapport. In those situations where core requirements are in conflict, however, rapport-building negotiators are faced with a no-win situation. If they truthfully present the negative information, they may induce conflict and negative affect in their partner—both rapport killers (Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal 1990). On the other hand, they can deceive their partner, either through lying or through more palatable and ethically gray behaviors like dissembling or omitting key information. These actions may damage the long-term relationship, but until the deception is found out, rapport may be maintained. Thus, deception can be a rapport-building action in the short term, meaning that when negotiators have conflicting core preferences, those in a high rapport setting may be more likely to deceive.

Misbehavior Against the Client. A second type of misbehavior can occur in negotiations where the negotiator is not representing her own interests but those of a client. In particular, agent-negotiators can choose to sacrifice some of the interests of their clients in the name of successfully closing a deal. If the first type of misbehavior is directed across the table toward the negotiation partner, the second type of misbehavior is directed toward the back room, to wit, toward the client.

We propose that in settings where the core preferences of the client are in conflict with those of the negotiation partner, *high rapport settings are also likely to result in an increase of this second type of misbehavior, compromising the client's interests*. The literature on agency theory primarily has investigated the roles of contract design, performance evaluation, and goal congruence to prevent opportunistic behavior such as shirking and misrepresentation (Eisenhardt 1989, Sappington 1991). We suggest that the motivation to maintain rapport can serve as a different type of incentive for negotiators. When an agent takes a stand and strictly enforces client directives that are likely to cause conflict and negative affect, she is engaging in

behavior that can be expected to damage rapport with the negotiation partner. One way of resolving this dissonance is to compromise on the client's demands, thereby reducing the points of conflict and facilitating rapport.

The Experimental Setting: Negotiation Impasse

All three experiments reported in this paper used the Bullard Houses case (Karp et al. 2006), a widely used ethics case developed by Northwestern University's Dispute Resolution Research Center in the Kellogg School of Management. The case involves interactions between one buyer agent and one seller agent negotiating over a piece of prime real estate. This case was selected for these experiments because it leads to a negotiation impasse in which it is easy to misbehave in more than one way. Its usage across the three experiments contributes to comparability across varying manipulations and populations.

Participants were assigned to dyads, with each member of the pair assigned to either the role of the buyer agent or the seller agent. The Bullard Houses case consists of two pages of general information read by everyone and an additional two pages of role-specific information, read only by the participant in each role. The seller firm owns a group of historic row houses and wants to sell the property, with the caveat that it be developed for residential use only; the seller is adamantly against the use of the property for commercial purposes. The role-specific instructions to the sellers outline three alternative buyers who had already made attractive offers, and although the sellers were motivated to dispose of the houses quickly, it was more important that the property be used in a way consistent with seller's wishes. This makes it imperative that the seller's agent accurately understand how the buyer will use the property.

The buyer firm is a major hotel corporation that wants to develop the property into a luxury hotel. The buyer's instructions indicate that in order for the purchase to be viable, the buyer would have to incent the local government to overturn precedent and allow the zoning to be changed to commercial. If word got out about the client's identity and intentions, this would complicate the rezoning process. It would also vastly increase the price of this site as well as the buyer's alternative options. In other words, there were few alternative options for their next commercial site.

In sum, the seller's agent is required to *know how the buyer will use the property*, whereas the buyer's agent is directed *not to reveal the use of the land or the buyer's identity* to protect the firm's goals and interests. In this way, the case is intentionally constructed so as to create an impasse based on conflicting core priorities between buyer and seller agents. Furthermore,

the case creates an asymmetric pressure to misbehave between participants in the two roles. Specifically, although both buyer and seller agents are likely to feel some pressure to compromise the interests of their clients in order to facilitate closing a deal, the buyer's agent is likely to face a much greater temptation to deceive than the seller's agent. After all, the buyer's agent is explicitly given the instruction not to reveal the very information the seller will find key to making a good decision.

Experiment 1

The goal of the first experiment was to investigate the influence of rapport on unethical behavior in negotiations with a high degree of conflict. This experiment investigates both forms of misbehavior—toward the negotiation partner (lying, overpromising) and toward the client (compromising the clients' interests)—using mode of communication (face-to-face versus computer mediated) as the independent variable.

Method

Fifty-four executive MBA students in a negotiations class participated in the Bullard Houses negotiation as part of an in-class exercise. On average, the participants were 38 years old with 13.1 years of work experience (4.5 to 25; s.d. = 5.5), 2.3 years of sales experience (0 to 20; s.d. = 4.0), and 3.8 years of experience dealing with suppliers (0 to 18; s.d. = 4.7). Seventy-four percent of the participants were male. A variety of cultures was represented: 53% were from a western culture (North America, Europe, Australia), 40% were from an eastern culture (Asia, India), with the remaining participants from a Latin American culture. No significant differences among these demographic characteristics were found across the experimental conditions.

Participants were randomly assigned to 27 buyer–seller dyads. Each dyad was then randomly assigned to one of two rapport conditions. Rapport was manipulated via the mode in which participants communicated. The 14 dyads in the high rapport condition conducted their negotiations face-to-face, seated across from each other and isolated from other dyads. Participants in the high rapport condition were not primed or instructed to build rapport; they simply completed a negotiation in a typical face-to-face manner. The remaining 13 dyads in the low rapport condition conducted a computer-mediated negotiation over an instant messaging program. In the low rapport condition, buyers were seated in a separate room from sellers and both agents used desktop computers for their interactions. The interactions were captured via computer or audiotape, and the resulting transcripts allowed analysis of the agents' behavior and affective

verbal expressions as well as the outcomes of their interaction. Participants had a total of one hour to read the case and conduct the negotiation.

Following the interaction, participants completed questionnaires measuring their evaluations of the interaction, their negotiation partner, and future intentions. This questionnaire included a seven-item scale measuring rapport adapted from Puccinelli and Tickle-Degnen (2004) and Drolet and Morris (2000). Consistent with their approach, our measure includes one item each of mutual attention (I felt aware of and interested in the agent) and positivity (I liked and felt warm toward the agent) and five items of coordination (e.g., I felt like the agent and I were "on the same wavelength"; I felt a comfortable rhythm with and felt coordinated with the agent). All items were rated on a scale anchored on 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The entire scale is listed in the online appendix to this paper, which is available at http://www.bus.emory.edu/sdjap/current_vita.html.

Results

Manipulation Checks. The experiment included several measures of the success of the rapport manipulation. The first manipulation check consisted of the self-reported rapport scale embedded in the after-negotiation questionnaire. All seven items loaded on a single factor with an average factor loading of 0.84 (0.69 to 0.94; s.d. = 0.08) and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. The results indicate that the manipulation was successful, such that participants who conducted their negotiations face-to-face scored significantly higher on the rapport scale ($M = 5.41$, s.d. = 1.04) than did participants who conducted their negotiations online ($M = 3.77$, s.d. = 1.24, $F(1, 52) = 27.7$, $p < 0.001$).

As a second measure of rapport, we developed a composite scale of accommodating behavior made up of the following four items: (1) I tried to soothe the person's feelings. (2) I tried not to hurt the person's feelings. (3) If this rep's position seemed very important to them, I tried to meet their wishes. (4) In approaching negotiations, I tried to be considerate of this person's wishes. This measure serves as a self-reported indicator of behaviors associated with the mutual attention and coordination aspects of rapport. The results revealed that participants in the high-rapport condition reported a marginally significant increase in accommodating behavior compared to participants in the low rapport condition (5.0 versus 4.2; $t = 1.7$, $p < 0.10$).

Finally, we coded the transcripts of the negotiation for words associated with positive and negative affect (Larsen and Diener 1992, Russell 1980, Watson and Tellegen 1985). According to the three-part model of rapport we are using, maintaining positive affect is one important part of building rapport—and the one

that is most likely to be revealed in transcripts of the negotiations. A strict count of emotion words is a common content analysis technique (Krippendorf 1980, Carley 1993) and represents a conservative test: felt emotions are likely to be undercounted, because emotion is often conveyed in nonverbal forms (Fridja 1988, Reissman 1993). However, this approach is useful because it does not rely on any form of interpretive analysis or participant self-reports.

A meta-analysis of emotion words used in past research indicates that there are 71 words that reflect various forms of affect (Remington et al. 2000). We found 60 of these 71 words and counted all appearances of each word, including common variants such as plural or past tense forms. Words were examined in context, making sure to eliminate words that were not used to convey emotion (e.g., "we're still talking" versus "I'm feeling still and settled"). A listing of these words and their frequencies across the rapport condition can be found in the online appendix. We examined positive and negative affect across the conditions by subtracting the negative affect word count from the positive word count for each participant. A higher index score indicates a higher net positive affect expressed during the negotiation. A one-way ANOVA indicates there was more positive affect expressed in the high rapport, face-to-face condition ($M = 5.38$) than in the low rapport, online condition ($M = 3.04$; $F(1, 52) = 6.63$, $p < 0.01$).

Unethical Behavior. We predicted that in this high conflict setting, misbehavior is likely to be a function of rapport, such that higher levels of rapport would lead to higher levels of misbehavior. We tested this hypothesis in several ways.

One indicator of misbehavior is simply the proportion of dyads that successfully brokered a deal. The Bullard Houses case is intentionally set up such that the buyers and sellers have insurmountable differences concerning the disposition and use of the property. If the sellers knew the buyers' true intentions, they would not sell. Thus, a successful resolution is an indication that either the buyer was less than truthful, the buyer's agent or the seller's agent compromised the desires of the client, or both. The results were consistent with our predictions. When participants negotiated face-to-face (high rapport condition), 84.6% of dyads reached a deal, indicating a high level of misbehavior. When participants negotiated via instant messaging (low rapport condition), the proportion of successful deals dropped to 42.9%, with the rest ending at an impasse. A logistic regression revealed that, as predicted, the rapport condition (high versus low) was a significant predictor of the likelihood of reaching a deal ($X^2(1) = 6.85$, $p < 0.01$).

As a second indicator of misbehavior, we examined the transcripts of the negotiations for evidence of the

Table 1   Experiment 1: Instances of Misbehavior Increase with Increased Rapport

	(Unethical) deal reached (%)	Deceive negotiation partner		Compromise client's interests		Total misbehavior	
		Seller	Buyer	Seller	Buyer	Seller	Buyer
High rapport (face-to-face)	84.6	2.85 (3.36)	6.23 (4.15)	4.08 (4.23)	3.38 (3.55)	6.92 (5.81)	9.62 (5.04)
Low rapport (online)	42.9	0.79 (0.89)	3.64 (2.65)	0.79 (0.89)	0.0	1.50 (1.79)	3.64 (2.65)

Notes. A successful deal could only be reached if one or both parties engaged in unethical behavior; therefore, a deal being reached was one indicator of unethical behavior. Cell means report another measure: average instances of misbehavior per participant during the negotiation, based on a content analysis of negotiation transcripts. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

two types of ethical transgressions most of interest to us: deceiving the negotiating partner (through misleading statements, overpromising, or outright lying) and compromising the client (by violating the client's explicit instructions). Three research assistants, blind to the experimental condition coded the transcripts for instances of misbehavior. Agreement among the coders was quite high ($r = 0.65$) and disagreements were resolved through discussion. The coding for misbehavior was distinct from, and conducted separately from, the affect count that served as a manipulation check. Across all participants, there were 287 total instances of misbehavior of some form. Some examples of each type of misbehavior, pulled from the transcripts, are given in the online appendix.

Consistent with the results of the negotiation outcome measure, participants who conducted their negotiations face-to-face were more likely to misbehave, as evidenced by the language used in the transcripts, than were participants whose negotiations were computer mediated (see Table 1). An ANOVA predicting total misbehavior as a function of rapport (high versus low), role (seller versus buyer) and the interaction revealed a significant effect of rapport ($F(1, 50) = 25.97$, $p < 0.001$). Role was also a significant predictor of misbehavior, with buyers more likely to misbehave than sellers ($F(1, 50) = 4.68$, $p < 0.05$). Consistent with our prediction, there was no significant interaction between rapport and role ($p > 0.80$), suggesting that the influence of rapport on misbehavior was consistent across roles.

We next examined each type of misbehavior. Recall that we had predicted not just more ethical lapses in the aggregate but both more deception toward the negotiating partner as well as more compromising of clients' interests. Both of these predictions were supported by the data. Deceiving the negotiation partner (including misleading statements, overpromising, and lying) was significantly more likely among buyers than sellers—not surprising, given the structure of the case ($F(1, 50) = 14.80$, $p < 0.001$). More germane to the proposed hypothesis, deception was greater among participants in the high rapport condition than among those in the low rapport condition

($F(1, 50) = 8.21$, $p < 0.01$). The interaction between rapport and role was not significant ($p > 0.70$). Finally, in addition to being more likely to deceive their negotiation partners, participants in the high rapport condition were also more likely to compromise their client's interests than were participants in the low rapport condition ($F(1, 50) = 19.83$, $p < 0.001$). There was no difference in compromising the client based on buyer and seller roles ($p > 0.35$), and the interaction between rapport and role was not significant ($p > 0.95$).

We have argued that negotiators in high conflict negotiations may misbehave as a way of maintaining a high level of rapport with their partners. This implies that misbehavior is likely to be deliberate and strategic and that participants will be aware of the ethically questionable nature of their behavior. Thus, as a third indicator of misbehavior, we asked participants in the post-negotiation questionnaire to self-report ethical violations during the negotiation.

The results reveal that participants with high rapport considered their own actions to be more ethically questionable than did participants with low rapport. Specifically, in the high rapport condition, in which negotiations were conducted face-to-face, buyers were more likely to admit to having behaved unethically (i.e., primarily to have lied, misled, or evaded the seller's queries) than were participants in the low rapport condition, in which negotiations were conducted online (46.2% versus 25.0%). This pattern was reversed for participants denying ethical lapses: 23.1% of participants in the high rapport condition answered no, they did not behave in an ethically questionable way, compared to 46.4% in the low rapport condition. A logistic regression revealed this interaction to be significant ($X^2(1) = 4.64$, $p < 0.05$). The online appendix reveals a sample of the self-reported ethical violations.

Consequences of Rapport. Past research suggests that rapport is fundamental to the development of trust, respect, and cooperation. In our context, this would suggest that participants would experience some of the downstream consequences of rapport

despite the concurrent high levels of misbehavior. As an example, there is a known relationship between rapport and satisfaction with an interaction, including settings such as physician–patient relationships (Koss and Rosenthal 1997) and firm–customer interactions (Gremler and Gwinner 2000). Within the marketing literature, research in salesforce management has shown that emotions are related to future intentions for achievement (Brown et al. 1997) as well as the behaviors that are directed toward achievement (Brown et al. 1997; Verbeke and Bagozzi 2000, 2002).

We examined three widely studied outcomes of relational exchange—satisfaction with the negotiation, trust of the negotiation partner, and willingness to work with the negotiation partner in future exchanges—to see whether misbehavior mitigated the advantages of rapport in negotiations. The results are consistent with our account, in that the correlates of rapport did not appear to be negatively affected by the misbehavior of the participants in the negotiation. Specifically, we found that satisfaction (5.7 versus 4.8; $t = 3.55$, $p < 0.001$), trust (5.3 versus 3.9; $t = 3.55$, $p < 0.001$), and willingness to work with the partner again (5.7 versus 4.7; $t = 1.72$, $p < 0.09$) were all higher for participants in the high rapport condition. In short, the condition with the highest level of misbehavior—the high rapport condition where participants negotiated face-to-face—was also the condition with the most positive indicators of the downstream consequences of rapport.

Control Measures. To make sure any differences we found could not be attributed to a difference in the time spent on negotiations, we recorded the total negotiation time. All participants completed their interactions during the allotted time, and the amount of time to completion did not differ across condition (face-to-face: 49.5 minutes versus online: 47.2 minutes; $t < 1$).

Could knowing that their conversations were being recorded for research purposes have affected the agents' negotiations differently in the two rapport conditions? In the questionnaire, we asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree): I was comfortable having this negotiation recorded; It made me nervous to know that our negotiation was being recorded. The difference in the mean value of these statements across rapport conditions was not significant ($t < 1$ for both).

Another possible explanation for at least some of the results of Experiment 1 is that participants in the online condition simply cared less about engaging with their negotiation partners. If participants lacked the motivation to engage, it may be a sign of a general lack of motivation to negotiate or take the task seriously. However, an analysis of the negotiation transcripts showed that online conversations contained more expressions of formal politeness, such as "pleasure to meet you," "please," and "thank you," than did the face-to-face negotiations ($M = 4.8$ versus 1.1, $F = 15.20$, $p < 0.001$).[1] This indicates that online negotiators used a more formal style of conversation, suggesting that they were engaged in the task and seeking to maintain a basic level of politeness to facilitate task accomplishment but not the more emotionally rich communication that facilitates rapport.

Finally, we examined a number of alternative factors across the conditions that could potentially account for the reported differences in misbehavior, including the familiarity between participants, negotiating effort, the need to strike a deal, the degree to which the task was taken seriously, and the degree to which the participants were motivated to act on their clients' behalf. Analysis revealed no differences across the rapport conditions ($t < 1$ for all).

Discussion
Experiment 1 provides support for our central hypothesis that under impasse conditions, high levels of rapport actually lead to higher levels of unethical behavior than do low levels of rapport. We found that high rapport led to increases in two different types of misbehavior: both misleading one's negotiation partner and betraying the interests of one's principal.

This experiment used multiple, convergent measures of all the constructs of interest. Rapport was measured using a self-reported composite of feeling of rapport (e.g., feeling "in sync"); a measure of behaviors associated with rapport (e.g., being accommodating); a measure of the affective language used during the negotiations; and measures of the downstream correlates of rapport (e.g., willingness to work with the partner again). All of these measures confirmed that participants negotiating face-to-face experienced higher levels of rapport than did participants negotiating online.

We also used multiple, convergent measures of misbehavior. Evidence of misbehavior was found in the proportion of deals reached, in dishonest statements recorded in transcripts of the negotiations, and in self-reports of misbehavior. It is worth noting that lying and other forms of unethical behavior are pervasive throughout, and are to some degree, encouraged by the setting in the case. However, the generally high motivation to misbehave cannot explain the observed differences in misbehavior across the conditions. All measures confirmed that those in the high rapport,

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[1] This result includes controls for the role of the participant and the number of words used in the interaction, neither of which reach statistical significance.

face-to-face condition behaved less ethically than did those in the low rapport condition, and, in fact, they did so knowingly. Finally, the experiment included a number of control measures designed to help rule out possible alternative explanations.

In this experiment, rapport was manipulated through the mode of communication, such that those conducting negotiations face-to-face had a higher level of rapport than did people conducting negotiations online via a computer-mediated instant messaging program. Although the results were consistent with our predictions, it is important to note that face-to-face negotiations differ from online negotiations in a number of ways in addition to rapport. One potentially relevant difference is in the amount of cognitive resources required to conduct face-to-face negotiations relative to online negotiations. When interacting face-to-face, negotiators must manage verbal, visual, and affective cues that could make the "relational work" of the interaction demanding (Es et al. 2004). This is consistent with research in psychology, which finds that individuals are motivated to maintain positive affect (Isen 1987) and that in face-to-face interactions people experience greater pressure to react instantaneously and manage emotions (Es et al. 2004). Although helpful, sending and receiving nonverbal cues requires extra effort that may not be required in strictly verbal online negotiations. If behaving ethically requires more cognitive resources than does misbehaving, then the increased misbehavior found in Experiment 1 could reasonably be attributed to differences in cognitive load instead of differences in rapport. In other words if individuals use their cognitive resources to build rapport, they have fewer resources left to focus on behaving ethically. This alternative explanation is consistent with depletion theory, which has shown that when people have expended cognitive resources toward a task (e.g., processing nonverbal cues), they have fewer resources left to devote to self-regulatory tasks, such as behaving ethically (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996).

A related concern that arises from Experiment 1 might be whether rapport is driving the misbehavior or whether it is the joint task of developing rapport in addition to managing the negotiation that facilitates misbehavior. Experiment 2 was designed to address these concerns by isolating the development of rapport from the negotiation task and by contrasting online negotiations in the treatment group with a control group that also negotiates online.

Experiment 2

The purpose of Experiment 2 was to rule out alternative explanations for the misbehavior effects reported in Experiment 1 rooted in the differences between face-to-face and online negotiations and to establish the causal order of rapport as driving the negotiation outcome, versus being simultaneously developed. In the previous experiment, the rapport manipulation (mode of communication) was arguably confounded with the cognitive load required to conduct the negotiation. In this experiment, we manipulate rapport independently of the mode and sequence of communication in which the negotiations were conducted. Specifically, in Experiment 2, everyone conducted the negotiations online, via instant messaging, thereby holding the cognitive load constant across the conditions.

Method
Participants were 82 undergraduate business students. Fifty-one percent of the participants were male and their average age was 22 years old. Participants were randomly assigned to a rapport condition (high versus low) and also to a role as either a buyer's agent or a seller's agent in the Bullard Houses negotiation simulation. The experiment was conducted in a networked computer lab. Negotiating dyads were seated on opposite sides of the lab, with their backs to each other, limiting any opportunity for nonverbal communication. Participants were instructed to conduct their negotiations only through instant messaging.

In the low rapport condition, 40 participants (20 dyads) simply read the case and began the negotiation, just like participants in the low rapport condition in Experiment 1. In the high rapport condition, after reading the case, but before beginning the negotiation, each of the 21 dyads participated in a rapport-building exercise. Participants were instructed to introduce themselves to each other, sharing their names, hometowns, and concentration (major). Based on a manipulation previously used by Drolet and Morris (2000) and Moore et al. (1999), participants were then asked to take five minutes to discuss some of the positive experiences they have had at school. After the rapport-building exercise, participants were seated in the lab with their backs to each other, just like participants in the low rapport condition. Thus, this manipulation holds the negotiation experience constant across conditions (online media) but allows participants to establish rapport *before* the negotiation for those in the high rapport condition. After the rapport-building exercise, but before the negotiation, participants were given a brief questionnaire asking about their current state of mind.

Following the negotiation, participants completed a questionnaire measuring their perceived rapport with their negotiation partner. They were also asked to evaluate their own misbehavior by indicating their agreement with the statement, "I made false statements to conceal my true purposes," on a seven-point scale.

Results

Manipulation Checks. We used the same composite rapport measure used in the post-negotiation questionnaire in Experiment 1. The results reveal that participants in the high rapport condition reported experiencing a higher level of rapport than did participants in the low rapport condition (4.8 versus 4.2; $t = -2.59$, $p < 0.05$).

In addition, to discretely establish that participants in the high rapport condition were motivated to establish rapport, we asked them about their state of mind after the rapport-building exercise but before starting negotiations. Tickle-Dengen and Rosenthal (1990) propose that in early interactions, individuals primarily focus on attention and positivity in the development of rapport relative to the third dimension, coordination. Attention and positivity in initial interactions will manifest itself in "abbreviated forms" (Mehrabian 1971) of nonverbal behavior such as trunk lean, body orientation toward each other, and the direction of their gaze. This speaks to basic approach-and-avoidance forces and the evaluative demands on the individuals. Rapport depends heavily on both individuals exhibiting and perceiving positive cues toward the other such that they are able to create a shared behavioral style and adopt each other's perspective. To this end, participants were asked to indicate how open and indifferent they felt immediately before beginning the negotiation. We anticipated that participants who had participated in the rapport-building exercise would feel more open and less indifferent going into the negotiation. Consistent with this view, we found that participants in the high rapport condition reported feeling more open (5.4 versus 4.8; $t = 2.57$; $p < 0.01$) and less indifferent (2.9 versus 3.5; $t = 2.11$; $p < 0.05$) than did participants in the low rapport condition, who did not talk face-to-face with their partners before beginning negotiations. This manipulation check suggests that rapport was established before negotiations began.

Unethical Behavior. As an initial measure of misbehavior, we looked at the proportion of participants who reached a deal in the case. Results reveal that 79.5% of participants in the low rapport condition reached a deal, compared with 87.8% in the high rapport condition. Although the difference was in the predicted direction, it did not reach significance ($X^2(1) = 1.02$, *ns*). Although we know that rapport differed across the conditions, we considered the possibility that the rapport-building manipulation might not have been equally effective for all participants in the high rapport condition. As a more conservative test of our hypothesis, we therefore eliminated those individuals whose reported rapport score was one standard deviation below the mean level of rapport, leaving 30 of the original 42 participants in the high

rapport condition. We then compared the proportion of deals made among those remaining in the high rapport condition to the proportion of deals made in the control condition. This analysis indicates that 97.0% of the participants in the high rapport condition reached a deal, versus 79.5% in the low rapport condition, a difference that is significant ($X^2(1) = 4.41$, $p < 0.05$).

As a second measure of misbehavior, participants were also asked to evaluate the truthfulness of their statements during the negotiation. This subjective self-evaluation revealed that, consistent with our predictions, participants in the high rapport condition were more likely to agree that they had made false statements in order to conceal their true purpose (3.5 versus 2.6; $t = -2.12$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Experiment 2 replicates the main finding from Experiment 1—that high rapport can increase misbehavior—using a different manipulation of rapport, one that effectively rules out cognitive load as an explanation. It is important to note that this experiment does not prove that cognitive load plays no part in misbehavior. We suspect that it does. However, cognitive load cannot explain the differences in misbehavior reported in Experiment 2, making rapport a more parsimonious explanation for the results of both experiments.

Experiment 3

The previous experiments paint a relatively dark view of rapport, suggesting that it will facilitate unethical behavior in an impasse and that agents will knowingly and strategically misbehave to maintain rapport. Given the many benefits of rapport in negotiations, one might naturally ask whether the negative effects we've identified can be overcome. Put another way, can negotiators receive the benefits of high rapport, such as more trust, cooperation, and positive emotions, without suffering the negative consequences of higher incidence of ethical lapse? Experiment 3 was designed to answer this question. Specifically, we tested whether a subtle reminder immediately before a negotiation of the long-term consequences of unethical behavior on one's reputation would decrease the incidence of misbehavior among negotiators with high rapport.

Method

Participants were 46 MBA students in a negotiations class with an average of five years of work and sales experience; 57% of the students were male, and the average age was 28 years old. Thirty-six percent of them were from an Asian, 43% from a Western, 10% from an African, and 7% from a Latin American culture. As with the previous experiments, all participants were randomly assigned to the role of a buyer's

agent or a seller's agent in the Bullard Houses negotiation simulation. In this experiment all negotiations were conducted face-to-face. In other words, all participants were in a high rapport situation when negotiating. Before the negotiation began, all participants received some final instructions under the guise of making the negotiation task more realistic. Each dyad was randomly assigned to receive one of two types of final instructions (both members of the dyad received the same type of instructions). Participants in the *compensation goal* condition read the following passage:

> We would like this negotiation to be as real as possible. Because simulated classroom exercises differ from real-world settings in many ways, you may find yourself acting in ways that are not typical of how you would act in a real business setting. In order to avoid this, we wanted to remind you of some things that would be obvious if you really found yourself in this situation.
>
> Remember that although the focus of this exercise is the present negotiation, if this were real, [this negotiation might have long-term professional consequences. For many negotiators, compensation is tied to successfully reaching an agreement—for example, real estate agents are typically only paid when a deal has been closed. In addition, your ability to continue representing your current client and your ability to secure new clients will rely, at least in part, on your ability to successfully resolve negotiations.] To the extent that any of these concerns would influence your behavior in your profession, treat them as real concerns in this simulated negotiation.
>
> Please treat this negotiation as if it were a real negotiation, with all the typical downstream consequences of a real negotiation.

Participants in the *reputation goal* condition read the same passage, but with the portion in brackets replaced with the following:

> ...you would also need to live with the legal, social, and professional consequences of any decisions you make during the negotiation. Your success in future negotiations, your continued employment with the client you represent, and your reputation in the local business community—including your ability to get other jobs—could all be affected by the decisions you make as a negotiator.

These two conditions are meant to emphasize one of the two conflicting goals that are likely to be present for all negotiators: reaching a successful deal and maintaining one's reputation for behaving ethically. In the real world, both an ability to close deals and a reputation for behaving ethically are assets with long-term implications. This manipulation was simply meant to shift the relative importance of these two goals for participants. Importantly, these conditions are designed to increase the importance of one of these goals without making rapport any more or less important in the ensuing negotiation.

Following the negotiation, participants completed a brief questionnaire about their experience. Within the questionnaire was a question measuring the motivation of participants during the negotiation: I wanted to be absolutely honest, even if it meant not striking a deal. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with that statement, with responses measured on a seven-point scale, anchored on 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

Results

Manipulation Checks. As a check of whether the reminder embedded in the instructions created different motivations in the two conditions, we examined participants' responses to the question of how motivated they were to be honest. Consistent with our intentions, participants in the reputation goal condition were significantly more likely to report being motivated by a desire to be honest than by a desire to strike a deal (6.0 versus 5.0; $t = -2.10$, $p < 0.05$).

Unethical Behavior. Just as in the previous two experiments, our measure of misbehavior was the percentage of negotiating dyads that were able to close a deal. In the compensation goal condition, 75.0% of participant dyads successfully closed a deal, a percentage roughly in line with the results of the high rapport (face-to-face) condition in Experiment 1. When participants were given a gentle reminder of the possible consequences of misbehavior to their reputations, the proportion of deals dropped to 45.5% ($X^2(1) = 4.21$, $p < 0.05$).

Rapport and the Effects of Rapport. One question we sought to answer with this study was whether people in high conflict negotiation settings could establish a high level of rapport but also overcome the negative consequences of high rapport (i.e., increased misbehavior). To this end, we measured rapport using the same composite measure used in Experiments 1 and 2. The results revealed no difference in self-reported rapport between the compensation goal and the reputation goal conditions (5.0 versus 4.9; $p > 0.70$). We also examined the downstream consequences of rapport controlling for the deal outcome (i.e., whether or not participants reached a deal) and found no significant differences in terms of satisfaction with the negotiation (5.5 versus 4.8; $t = 0.87$, $p < 0.35$), trust of the negotiation partner (4.9 versus 4.6; $t = 0.37$, $p < 0.70$), and willingness to work with the negotiation partner again in the future (5.7 versus 5.1; $t = 0.76$, $p < 0.45$).

Discussion
The results of Experiment 3 suggest that participants can reap the benefits of high rapport while avoiding the costs—if they are vigilant. We found that

among negotiators with high rapport, a reminder to think about the long-term reputational consequences of misbehavior resulted in a higher ethical standard than did a reminder to think about the pecuniary consequences of failing to come to a deal. In both cases, rapport remained high and there were no differences in the downstream correlates of rapport, such as trust and satisfaction.

General Discussion

In this research, we contest the popular notion that rapport between negotiation partners is an unallayed good. Although we acknowledge that rapport offers many advantages, the research presented in this paper suggests that when there is a high degree of conflict in the core values held by the negotiating partners, rapport has a dark side. In a series of experiments, we document that high levels of rapport lead to a higher incidence of misbehavior—both misleading negotiation partners and forsaking the interests of employers. One possible reason for this increase in misbehavior is the reluctance of negotiators who are trying to maintain rapport to deliver bad news, revealing the impasse.

More practically, at the start of the negotiation, neither agent knows *ex ante* whether the negotiation will lie in a positive or negative bargaining zone. The prevailing wisdom is to develop rapport as a means of determining this. However, our findings caution that high rapport in situations of impasse may in fact, create a slippery slope for misbehavior. Thus, it appears that the social pressures that arise from rapport make it difficult for agents to make better or rational decisions—i.e., to walk away upholding their client's desires without incurring negative ethical and economic consequences. This departs from conventional wisdom that face-to-face meetings are viewed as more appropriate for dealing with highly equivocal situations that involve multiple, conflicting interpretations (Daft and Lengel 1986).

We agree with the consensus view that it is often incumbent to maintain rapport and goodwill if negotiators are to be kept at the table. At the same time, however, the "table" is becoming more metaphorical. Agents are increasingly relying on virtual meetings—via computer conferencing, social media, instant messaging, online chat, and other computer-mediated communication technologies—to manage these exchanges. Such technologies enable interactions and collaborations over wide geographic and cultural distances but are also reductionistic in their ability to convey emotions, intentions, and other forms of nonverbal communication relative to face-to-face meetings. Our results would suggest that in situations of impasse, the inhibited ability to create rapport in computer-mediated environments may, in fact, result in better outcomes for clients and less misbehavior in the process.

Theoretical Contributions
Collectively, we examine the interface at which negotiation theory, agency theory, ethics, and marketing meet in interactions between buyer–seller agents. The pattern of findings presented here is consistent with narrative theorists, who show that as individuals co-create narratives the inherent process of a story builds tension that requires a resolution (Bruner 1986, Riessman 1993, Ochs and Capps 2001); in this interaction there were no means of resolution. Because the dyads could not end their story together on a positive note without misbehaving, it appears that those who interacted face-to-face, and experienced the greatest pressure to co-create their stories while maintaining rapport, became more likely to misbehave as a means of relieving the tension that was building. This finding also accords with the classical experiments on compliance, in which people have difficulty refusing inappropriate face-to-face requests (Milgram 1975). We propose that the urgent need to manage rapport may inhibit the agent's focus on the client's interests.

Our findings contribute to research on ethics in organizations by situating ethical action within a demanding interpersonal context and examining the relational facilitators of actual (versus self-reported intentions or simulated) misbehavior. It also advances our understanding of the role of emotional phenomena such as rapport and ethical behavior. Cognitive neuroscience researchers have confirmed that both cognitive and emotional processes play critical roles in ethical decision making (Greene et al. 2004, Greene and Haidt 2002). Our research adds to this emerging perspective that individuals tend to have affective reactions to ethical issues and that knowledge of affect will enhance understanding of unethical behavior.

Our results also suggest that cognitive models of ethical interaction processes could be enhanced by accounting for rapport management. Most models of ethical behavior include characteristics of the individual decision maker, such as moral judgment, but fail to acknowledge the important role of an individual's affect or interpersonal demands for rapport. Further, these results suggest that affect as it transpires between individuals is an important element of ethical or unethical action. Further research could increase the robustness and predictive ability of these models.

Managerial Implications
The demonstration that reminders to act ethically can mitigate misbehavior is consistent with research in business ethics that has also shown the effectiveness of organizations that continuously cue ethics

and reinforce the message that employees need to act ethically (and to eschew unethical behavior). Such reminders might also help agents stay focused on their client's goals. It may well be that agents who reiterated their clients' concerns via repeated questioning of their counterpart were less likely to come to a deal. Practically, this could suggest that active attempts to remain focused on their clients' concerns and wishes via repeated questioning, whether in face-to-face or online interactions, could help the agents stay on task and not get swept up by the effects of rapport.

Our results also imply that managers need to be aware of the ways in which interpersonal interactions at work may influence unethical behavior. Previous work in business ethics has indicated that referent others will have an impact on ethical and unethical behavior (Treviño 1986, Wortruba 1990), with the assumption that pressures from referent others at work lead employees to succumb to temptation. Our results extend this thinking to propose that an attempt to maintain rapport can also lead to unethical behavior. These results have particular application to client or customer situations in which an individual's interest in keeping the client "happy" may lead to cutting ethical corners. Firms need to realize that their policies and interaction practices should not emphasize retaining customers or clients "at any cost." Similarly, corporate policies need to encourage employee dissent and provide avenues for employees to voice their opinions—potentially online or through other computer-mediated means, where rapport management demands are lowered and it becomes easier to pose difficult questions or speak up about questionable practices.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research
The research is not without limitations. The data, while imperfect, were painstakingly gathered from executive, graduate, and undergraduate populations and analyzed in an attempt to better understand the nature of rapport. Because of cost and time constraints, our approach was not conducive to large sample sizes. However, the significance of our results and their patterns across multiple indicators and various levels of analyses provide a measure of confidence and trustworthiness to our conclusions and discussion. More broadly, this research is meant to provide a starting point for future research on the interrelationships of rapport, misbehavior, and technology.

An important issue for future research would be to more generally explore additional reasons as to *why* people are knowingly unethical. Our results suggest that the need to "do business," that is, to create rapport with the other agent and close the deal

at any cost, enables justification of their actions. Or maybe the unethical behavior—lying, misleading, overpromising, or compromising client wishes—is too innocuous to be considered unethical. Or as suggested by recent research in marketing, an individual's self concept might keep her from viewing her actions as unethical (Mazar et al. 2008). In this context, negotiators could suffer from inattention to moral standards during a negotiation, allowing them to engage in objectively unethical behavior without damaging a self-view as an honest person. These possibilities and more are ripe for additional examination.

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