

# Negotiation as a Profession in the Making

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## Abstract

Negotiation is as old as human society, yet the effort to understand, teach, and institutionalize it is relatively recent. This article traces how negotiation has developed across domains such as diplomacy, labor relations, academia, and business, highlighting major paradigm shifts along the way. It shows how negotiation has gradually moved from an individual skill to a shared organizational concern and how attempts at systematizing it continue to shape its role in professional and institutional settings.



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## Biography

He is Managing Partner of Crowlight Partners. He advises companies on the preparation and conduct of complex negotiations, focusing on the strategic setup behind the table — aligning stakeholders, stress-testing assumptions, and helping leaders navigate high-stakes decisions. His work draws on 25 years of experience in strategy execution and organisational change across global enterprises.



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She is Associate Partner at Crowlight Partners. She advises, trains, and lectures on international negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution, supporting governments, international organisations, and academic institutions across Europe, Central Asia, and the Balkans. She has also contributed to several publications on the subject.

## 1. From Ancient Diplomacy to Modern Statecraft

For millennia, civilizations have engaged in basic bartering and struck agreements to settle disputes, facilitate trade, and build alliances. Archaeologists have found clay tablets in Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt that record negotiated terms between kingdoms (Moran, 1992). Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (5th century BCE) discusses strategic diplomacy and avoiding conflict through skillful negotiation (Sun, trans. 2005), while Aristotle's writings on rhetoric were seminal in studying persuasive communication (Aristotle, trans. 2007). From war to commerce, building consensus was recognized as a valuable activity.

Throughout the Middle Ages, feudal lords negotiated vassalage and marriage alliances, while agreements like the Magna Carta (1215) represented landmark negotiated settlements between rulers and their subjects (Carpenter, 2015). In the Islamic world, scholars such as al-Ghazali wrote about ethics in trade and negotiation, indicating a rich non-Western tradition valuing fair dealing (Islahi, 2005). Across cultures, efforts to resolve conflict or coordinate action were often facilitated by elders or other respected figures who drew on personal authority and shared norms. Where emissaries were involved, their role was often to convey positions rather than negotiate terms directly (Queller, 1967). Negotiations were typically viewed as an art, as success relied on personal skill, intuition, and often secrecy or power dynamics, rather than any formal science.

The evolution of negotiation as a political instrument is evident in early modern European diplomacy. The Peace of Westphalia (1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War, was achieved after years of multilateral talks involving dozens of envoys shuttling between the cities of Münster and Osnabrück. The resulting agreements ended a brutal war and are often credited with laying the foundation

for modern diplomacy, where treaties and alliances became the preferred route for resolving conflicts and balancing power, rather than resorting to perpetual war (although this interpretation has been challenged; cf. Osiander, 2001). In the 19th century, the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) offers another example of sophisticated diplomatic negotiation: European powers gathered to redraw the continent's map after the Napoleonic Wars, demonstrating the value of negotiation in achieving geopolitical stability (Kissinger, 1957).

After the devastation of two World Wars, nations created forums (like the League of Nations and later the United Nations in 1945) to facilitate peaceful negotiation and cooperation. Many international conflicts – from territorial disputes to arms control agreements – came to be addressed through diplomatic negotiation. However, the post-World War I Treaty of Versailles (1919) exemplified the limitations of imposed settlements rather than genuine negotiation, as the Allied victors largely dictated terms to Germany rather than engaging in mutual bargaining (MacMillan, 2001). Later, during the Cold War, superpowers turned to the negotiating table to manage existential tensions, leading to nuclear arms control agreements such as the SALT Treaties (1972, 1979) between the U.S. and USSR (Garthoff, 1985). At the same time, the Helsinki Final Act (1975), under the CSCE process, institutionalized East-West dialogue and broadened the scope of negotiation beyond military security (Thomas, 2001). These initiatives illustrate how negotiation evolved into a critical instrument of global governance, indispensable for stability in an era of nuclear peril and geopolitical rivalry. Through this evolution, diplomatic institutions formalized negotiation as a professional practice, complete with established protocols and career diplomats – though through the mid-19th century, these practitioners still learned primarily through mentorship and

experience rather than standardized academic training (Berridge, 2015).

## 2. The Rise of Labor Negotiations

While diplomacy had long been a key arena for negotiation, the industrial era introduced new contexts where negotiation became increasingly formalized, particularly between employers and organized labor. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries brought large-scale employment in factories and mines, often under harsh working conditions. Initially, workers had little leverage, with strikes and unrest as the primary means of resistance (Hobsbawm, 1964). This began to shift with the rise of labor unions, which introduced collective bargaining – the idea that workers could negotiate as a group with employers to improve wages, working hours, and conditions (Budd, 2017). The term “collective bargaining” was first coined in 1891 by British social reformer Beatrice Webb (Webb, 1891). Over time, the concept led to formalized negotiations between unions and employers, resulting in written agreements. In many countries, particularly in Europe and North America, this became the standard approach to settling labor disputes.

During the early 20th century, collective bargaining spread widely. In the United States, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 established the legal right for workers to organize and required employers to engage in good-faith negotiations with union representatives (Katz et al., 2017). Similar developments occurred across Europe, where strong trade unions grew powerful and sector-wide agreements became common in industrial relations (Visser, 2006). While the negotiations were often adversarial – characterized by tough haggling and even strikes or lockouts as leverage, they also showed that structured dialogue could substitute for open conflict (Walton & McKersie, 1965).

As negotiation became more structured in the labor context, several enduring features of modern practice emerged. One lasting legacy is the widespread use of contracts and formal agreements. The notion that a negotiation is not complete until documented in writing now permeates business negotiations of all kinds. Other features include formal preparation, clearly defined mandates, contractual deadlines (such as the expiration of collective agreements), and the strategic use of alternatives – including the threat of a strike or a lockout. Labor negotiations also introduced concepts like the strike deadline as a pressure point, and the idea of a “win-win” outcome in the form of productivity bargaining (trading efficiency gains for employee benefits), foreshadowing later interest-based negotiation models (Walton et al., 1994).

The labor context also contributed to the institutionalization of third-party involvement. Mediators and arbitrators were frequently used to resolve labor disputes, providing an early model of structured facilitation that later shaped commercial negotiations and laid the groundwork for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) frameworks (Stipanowich & Lamare, 2012; Lipsky et al., 2003).

In sum, labor negotiations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries helped consolidate negotiation as a repeatable, rule-bound process for balancing conflicting interests. Many of the tools, structures, and norms developed in this period would later be adapted across other domains, including corporate procurement, public sector reform, and international diplomacy.

From the mid-20th century onward, several overlapping streams began shaping the modern field of negotiation – formal modeling, the Harvard paradigm of principled negotiation, and behavioral research on human judgment. While not strictly sequential, these currents collect-

ively transformed negotiation from a craft into a structured discipline.

### 3. Negotiation Meets Science: Game Theory and Early Research

Until the mid-20th century, negotiation was seen mainly as a practical craft of politics, law, or commerce. It was rarely treated as an object of systematic academic inquiry. That began to change in the 1940s and 1950s, when scholars from disciplines such as economics, mathematics, and political science started to apply formal models to strategic interaction (Raiffa, 1982; Sebenius, 1992).

One influential development during this period was the emergence of game theory. In 1944, mathematician John von Neumann and economist Oskar Morgenstern published *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, introducing a conceptual framework for analyzing competitive and cooperative behavior between rational actors (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Their work laid the foundation for treating negotiation as a structured problem involving choices, trade-offs, and strategic interdependence.

By the 1950s and 1960s, figures such as Nobel laureate John Nash further developed this line of thinking. Nash's bargaining solution offered a mathematical model for predicting the outcome two rational parties might reach under specific assumptions (Nash, 1950; Nash, 1953). These contributions helped position negotiation not only as a practical craft but also as a phenomenon that could be modeled and analyzed.

Meanwhile, Thomas Schelling explored how game-theoretic insights might shed light on real-world geopolitical behavior. His 1960 book *The Strategy of Conflict* examined the logic of deterrence, commitment, and brinkmanship, particularly in the context of Cold War nuclear strategy (Schelling, 1960). Schelling argued that negotiators might deliberately limit their own options to make threats

more credible – an insight later examined in analyses of high-stakes diplomatic standoffs such as the Cuban Missile Crisis (Lebow & Stein, 1994). While it is difficult to draw direct causal lines between game-theoretic models and actual crisis management in that period, Schelling's work provided policymakers and scholars with new conceptual tools for illuminating strategic dynamics under extreme uncertainty.

In parallel, the mid-20th century saw the emergence of decision analysis and interdisciplinary conflict resolution research, which began to bridge theory and practice. Scholars from law, economics, psychology, and public policy contributed to a growing body of literature on how people negotiate – and how they might do so more effectively (Guetzkow, 1964; Boulding, 1962). Howard Raiffa, whose work combined formal modeling with real-world applicability, introduced quantitative decision-analysis techniques, helping negotiators evaluate trade-offs and improve decision quality (Raiffa, 1968).

### 4. The Harvard Paradigm and the Rise of Principled Negotiation

By the late 1970s, academic institutions began to devote more systematic attention to negotiation as a subject of research and education. This academic momentum led to the founding of the Harvard Negotiation Project (HNP) in 1979 under Professor Roger Fisher (Mnookin, 2003). As one of the first interdisciplinary initiatives focused specifically on negotiation, the project studied how negotiation works in practice and how it might be improved through better preparation, communication, and process design. The implicit underlying premise was that negotiation could be treated as a science that can be studied, improved, and taught.

While negotiation had long been discussed in legal, diplomatic, and business contexts, the Harvard project sought to distill transferable principles that could be

applied across domains. Scholars analyzed real-world cases from diverse settings – from labor disputes to peace talks – and developed practical concepts to guide negotiators. A prominent milestone in how negotiation was conceptualized and taught was the publication of *Getting to Yes* (1981) by Roger Fisher and William Ury (Fisher & Ury, 1981). In later editions, Bruce Patton was added as co-author (Fisher et al., 1991, 2011). The book introduced principled negotiation, often dubbed the “Harvard approach,” offering a concise set of actionable principles that could be applied across contexts, from business to diplomacy circles. Key tenets included: separating the people from the problem (i.e., dealing with issues without damaging relationships), exploring underlying interests rather than bargaining over positions, inventing options for mutual gain, and applying objective criteria to evaluate proposals. The book also introduced the concept of BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) to encourage negotiators to consider their walk-away options.

This and other frameworks equipped negotiators with the vocabulary to think more clearly about their approach to negotiating. The broader academic interest in negotiation during this period reflected a shift in mindset that began to demystify the field: no longer viewed solely as an innate talent possessed by naturally charismatic or persuasive deal-makers, negotiation started to be increasingly understood as a skill set with principles and techniques that could be learned, practiced, and refined (Lax & Sebenius, 1986).

In 1983, Harvard joined forces with MIT and Tufts to establish the Program on Negotiation (PON), an interdisciplinary consortium that serves as a global hub for negotiation scholarship, training, and practice. While the HNP focused on applied research and theory development, PON provides the broader platform for publishing, teaching, and practitioner

outreach. By the late 1980s, negotiation training had gained traction in law schools, business programs, and corporate training departments. Among business executives, diplomats, and public servants, scenario-based exercises and decision-making tools began to produce a growing number of professionals who approached deals methodically.

During this wave, several complementary schools of thought and influential figures emerged. In his 1982 book *The Art and Science of Negotiation* Raiffa integrated game theory, decision analysis, and early behavioral insights into a framework for practitioners (Raiffa, 1982). In parallel, trainers like Chester Karrass popularized negotiation in corporate settings (Karrass, 1993). In Europe, firms like Scotwork (UK, est. 1975) developed systematic negotiation frameworks based on empirical case analysis. Around the same period, scholars like I. William Zartman advanced the study of international conflict negotiation, introducing concepts such as “ripeness” and the “mutually hurting stalemate,” which became influential in peace mediation (Zartman, 2001, 2008). The proliferation of such training and research by the 1990s underscored how negotiation had evolved from a niche skill to a mainstream managerial competence. Over decades, such programs trained thousands of professionals worldwide.

The influence of principled negotiation extended beyond classrooms. Elements of interest-based bargaining were evident in diplomatic efforts such as the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israelis and Palestinians, where negotiators sought to address core needs such as security and autonomy rather than bargaining strictly over fixed positions. In business, many companies realized that an adversarial approach with suppliers or partners often undermined long-term value creation, and adopted more collaborative negotiation strategies. Negotiation became less about competing with each other and

more about joint problem-solving – a change in mindset that improved outcomes in many domains and that constituted a lasting contribution of the Harvard paradigm.

### **5. Beyond Rationality: Behavioral Insights and the Human Factor**

The Harvard approach acknowledged emotions and perceptions as factors negotiators needed to manage. But a parallel stream of research began developing a more systematic understanding of how cognitive biases, emotions, and perceptions influence decision-making. Starting in the late 1970s, cognitive psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky were conducting the foundational research that would become behavioral economics. Their 1979 prospect theory reshaped how scholars understood risk and decision-making, and by extension, its implications for negotiation behavior (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). They showed, for instance, that people are prone to anchoring bias, overconfidence, and loss aversion, thereby mapping the predictable ways people deviate from rational choice (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974, 1981).

Academic writers such as Max Bazerman and Margaret Neale helped translate these findings for practitioners in works like *Negotiating Rationally* by highlighting common pitfalls to guard against (Bazerman & Neale, 1992). One study found that even experienced professionals are vulnerable to predictable mistakes – such as failing to thoroughly consider the other side’s perspective and alternatives, assuming a fixed pie (zero-sum) when more value could be created, or believing they have captured most of the value when they actually left money on the table (Sebenius, 2001). Behavioral science added a rich dimension to both the theory and practice of negotiation.

As understanding of cognitive biases and behavioral insights deepened (Kahneman, 2011), negotiation training began emphasizing preparation, self-awareness,

and process discipline. Negotiators were taught to recognize and counteract biases, manage emotional triggers, and use active listening and empathy to surface interests. So-called “soft” skills, once seen as peripheral, became recognized as essential to effective negotiation.

A related shift concerned ethics and fairness. Behavioral studies showed that perceived unfairness could lead parties to reject agreements even if objectively beneficial (Güth et al., 1982; Thaler, 1988). This reinforced the use of objective criteria and transparent reasoning – principles long promoted by the Harvard model – and led organizations to incorporate values-based negotiation into their codes of conduct, especially in procurement and strategic partnerships.

By the 2000s, negotiation literature and training had absorbed behavioral insights, offering more realistic guidance on human tendencies (Malhotra & Bazerman, 2007). Preparation now meant not only crafting a strategy but also mentally calibrating one’s mindset: checking for biases, clarifying best- and worst-case outcomes, and even rehearsing difficult conversations to reduce emotional triggers. In effect, negotiation practice became a blend of analytical discipline and interpersonal acumen – of art and science – integrating the frameworks and analytic rigor from earlier decades with a keen appreciation for psychology and interpersonal dynamics.

### **6. Globalization and the Rise of Cross-Cultural Negotiation**

As international trade and collaboration accelerated throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries, globalization has expanded the scope of who we negotiate with, making cross-cultural negotiation competence a critical aspect of modern negotiation practice (Brett, 2007; Gelfand & Brett, 2004). Western and non-Western negotiation traditions, once separated by geography, have increasingly intersected

in global business dealings and international organizations.

One clear example is the contrast often drawn between typical American and East Asian negotiation styles. Western (particularly U.S.) negotiation culture historically prizes directness, efficiency, and contract-centered agreements. In contrast, many Eastern approaches emphasize relationship building, indirect communication, and holistic agreement-making (Sheng & Lou, 2024). Chinese negotiation practices, for instance, are deeply influenced by cultural values: the importance of *guanxi* (personal connections and trust), maintaining face (respect and saving face), and patient consensus-building over quick outcomes (Gao, Knight, & Ballantyne, 2012). It's common in Chinese business negotiations to spend significant time in social exchanges – dinners, polite discussions – before delving into business, since establishing interpersonal harmony is viewed as a prerequisite for successful bargaining. Western negotiators who are unaware of these differences might misinterpret patience as stubbornness or indirectness as evasiveness. Conversely, Eastern negotiators might view a hard-charging, deal-focused Western negotiator as aggressive or untrustworthy.

The convergence of global business has driven the need for cultural agility. Training programs have responded by including country-specific case studies, teaching frameworks along the lines of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001), e.g., how negotiations in Japan may involve long silences (reflecting a culture of high-context communication and deliberation) (Salacuse, 1991), or how in the Middle East, haggling is expected and even seen as a pleasurable part of building a partnership (Hamady, 1960; Coon, 1951).

In practice, successful global negotiators blend approaches. They may draw on the Harvard principled model as a backbone (being transparent, interest-focused, and

fair) while also adapting to different cultural contexts and local etiquette and norms.

## 7. The Digital Age: Technology Transforming Negotiation

Technological advancements have made negotiations faster, more data-driven, often remote, and certainly more cross-cultural.

Technology's impact is perhaps most visible in how we communicate and handle information during negotiations (Purdy et al., 2000). Email, teleconferencing, and collaboration software mean that deals can be discussed in real time across continents. A sales manager in London can negotiate a contract with a client in Dubai over Zoom, exchanging documents via cloud platforms – a process that would have involved significant logistical effort and time delays only a few decades ago.

While the fundamentals of negotiation still apply, conducting negotiations via screen or digital message requires new skills: understanding the limits of tone and body language online, communicating clearly in writing, and knowing when to switch to a phone call or an in-person meeting for sensitive issues.

At the same time, technology has also given rise to Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) systems, which handle massive volumes of conflicts with minimal human intervention (Katsh & Rifkin, 2001). eBay, for example, developed an online resolution platform that at one point resolved over 60 million disputes a year between buyers and sellers algorithmically or with limited mediation (Katsh & Rabinovich-Einy, 2017). These systems show that structured negotiation processes could be automated and scaled for certain types of simple disputes – offering a glimpse of what technology might achieve in defined, repetitive negotiation contexts.

Artificial intelligence and data analytics are also beginning to influence negoti-

ation practice. Negotiation chatbots and agents can haggle over prices or terms by learning from data (Baarslag et al., 2017). There are negotiation support tools that help human negotiators analyze proposals, evaluate trade-offs, and even flag emotional cues in communications (Kersten & Lai, 2007; Luo et al., 2024). While AI has not reached the sophistication to handle complex, relationship-heavy negotiations yet, it is quickly becoming part of a negotiator's toolkit. Institutions such as the Program on Negotiation at Harvard and the EU's Horizon research programs have launched initiatives to explore these tools and their implications. For business professionals, this means adapting to a changing landscape – one in which negotiation is increasingly informed by intelligent systems and data-driven insights that augment preparation and decision-making.

### **8. From Individual Skill to Organizational Capability**

Negotiation has long been viewed as a personal or interpersonal skill. Increasingly, however, organizations – particularly in business – recognize it as a collective capability that can be systematically developed and embedded across functions (Ertel, 1999). In the past, negotiation success often depended on the talents of a star dealmaker or the accumulated experience of a few savvy executives. Today, leading firms aim to build systematic competence in negotiation across the enterprise, recognizing its role in managing risk, creating value, and building durable partnerships – all of which can set them apart from the competition.

Treating negotiation as an organizational capability means going beyond ad-hoc training of individuals and instead creating structures, processes, and a culture that supports consistent preparation and execution, thereby producing superior negotiation outcomes (Borbély & Caputo, 2017a, 2017b; Gordon & Furlong, 2023).

For example, some companies have established Negotiation Centers of Excellence or created designated internal support units that coach and support any employee facing a critical negotiation – be it a major sales contract, a procurement deal, or a partnership agreement. Others have developed playbooks and tools – standardized checklists for preparation, deal archives to learn from past deals, guidelines on when to walk away, and so on – that everyone in the organization can use. It also involves leadership setting clear expectations and metrics around negotiation success, both in outcomes achieved and in the quality of the process.

The benefits of this holistic approach have been tangible. A study in 2008 found that companies ranked in the top quartile for negotiation effectiveness far outperformed their peers. That year, when many firms saw income drop, these leading negotiators achieved an average 42.5% increase in net income (Huthwaite International, 2008). World-class organizations embed negotiation into their DNA, much like quality control or innovation. They point out that when only individual skill is emphasized, organizations suffer inconsistency – a deal's outcome might depend too much on who handles it. In contrast, an organization with a strong negotiation capability achieves consistently better outcomes because it leverages collective knowledge and improves coordination. For large, strategic negotiations – such as outsourcing contracts or mergers – corporates now assemble cross-functional teams (finance, legal, technical experts) to coordinate strategy. This mirrors how a finely tuned sports team operates, where success depends less on a star player's individual brilliance, but more on preparation, role clarity, and shared strategy. It's systematic, and it's organizational.

Institutionalizing negotiation capability also involves leadership and culture (Movius & Susskind, 2009). Top execut-

ives set the tone by how they frame negotiation efforts, perhaps declaring that long-term relationships take precedence over short-term wins as a strategic priority. Yet, as the saying goes, “culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Such intent will not take root unless leaders also align incentives and policies, ensuring they do not inadvertently encourage unwanted negotiation behaviors. For instance, only rewarding salespeople on quarterly results could tempt them to use overly aggressive tactics that damage customer relations – smart companies mitigate that by incorporating customer satisfaction or repeat business into performance metrics. Some organizations even conduct “negotiation audits” to review how negotiations are prepared, executed, and followed up. They diagnose where their negotiation processes fall short, then implement changes. Perhaps they uncover gaps such as siloed planning, inconsistent messaging, or insufficient information sharing about deals, leading to repeated mistakes, so they institutionalize knowledge-sharing.

In essence, leading-edge businesses are beginning to link negotiation not just to individual training but to team processes, governance, and culture. Negotiation is no longer seen as an art practiced by a few, but is approached as a process that can be continually improved and scaled across the workforce and embedded throughout the organization. This professionalization and systematization mark the latest stage in the evolution of negotiation practice.

### **9. Institutions and the Search for Consolidation**

After decades of differentiation in the field of negotiation – intercultural approaches, digital and AI tools, psychological/behavioral training, organizational capability building – we can now observe a new pattern: We see multiple and repeated efforts to build institutions around it. This is a hallmark of a profession in the making. Initiatives are launched, discontin-

ued, and at times reborn. They do not yet amount to a consolidated whole, but together they signal a field searching for coherence and common identity.

Universities have anchored negotiation education across law, economics, psychology, public policy, and international relations. Professional academies – such as diplomatic and military academies attached to ministries of foreign affairs – likewise developed curricula to build negotiation capacity. International organizations followed suit, offering in-house programs and support functions, e.g., the UN Mediation Support Unit (DPPA), the OSCE Mediation Support Team, and mediation work coordinated through the Council of Europe’s CEPEJ Working Group on Mediation (UN DPPA/MSU, n.d.; OSCE, n.d.; Council of Europe/CEPEJ, n.d.). Some of these public programs are delivered with partner institutions such as the College of Europe or the École nationale d’administration (ENA), which in 2021 merged into the Institut national du service public (INSP).

Think tanks and executive-education providers developed intensive courses using realistic simulations and cross-sector cohorts (diplomacy, business, law, humanitarian practice). A long-running effort to connect research and practice is the Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Program. Established in 1988 under IIASA in Vienna, it has run continuously for decades, hosted by different institutions (IIASA, Clingendael, GIGA, and now Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy). PIN combines research, training, and practitioner exchange, publishing conceptual and applied work while convening an annual workshop that produces book-length volumes (Mautner-Markhof, 1989; PIN, n.d.; PINPoints, 2020–). In 2018, it created a training arm, POINT (Programme of International Negotiation Training), comprising senior trainers in negotiation and mediation (POINT, n.d.). Other networks such as the International

Negotiation Teaching and Research Association (INTRA) have similarly sought to link instructors and researchers across borders (INTRA, n.d.).

In parallel, negotiation competitions have become part of the talent pipeline. Law students participate in events organized by the InterNational Academy of Dispute Resolution (INADR), while business students engage in contests like The Negotiation Challenge (TNC) and the Warsaw Negotiation Round (WNR) (INADR, n.d.; The Negotiation Challenge, n.d.; WNR, n.d.). Since 2015, the IBA-VIAC CDRC Mediation and Negotiation Competition has offered a global platform, connecting universities with practitioners, and exposing a new generation to consensual dispute resolution (IBA-VIAC CDRC, 2024). This trend has been documented in negotiation pedagogy research (Smolinski & Kesting, 2013).

Alongside these initiatives, professional associations and conferences have begun to emerge. For many years, the Novancia Biennale in Paris brought together negotiation scholars and practitioners from around the world. After six editions, its global conference was discontinued in 2016 – a reminder of how fragile such initiatives can be. Yet efforts continue to re-establish regular international convenings. In 2025, for instance, the European Negotiation Conference gave rise to the European Negotiation Association (ENEA), which aspires to be a hub for research, practice, and innovation in negotiation and conflict resolution. Inspired by Aeneas – a figure of resilience and foresight – ENEA aims to sustain an annual rhythm of international conferences and strengthen a European negotiation community (European Negotiation Conference, 2025; E.NE.A., 2025).

Taken together, these developments reflect a field that is not yet consolidated but actively in search of it. Institutions and networks are proliferating, sometimes discontinuing, sometimes reinvent-

ing themselves. The landscape is fragmented but dynamic: universities, academies, think tanks, competitions, and associations are gradually building an infrastructure for training, knowledge exchange, and professional standards.

This trajectory is typical of professions in their formative stages. Negotiation now has a growing body of knowledge, identifiable education pathways, recurring platforms for peer exchange, and communities that straddle academia and practice. It is supported by an expanding infrastructure of education, research, and professional exchange – a sign of its ongoing maturation as a discipline. What remains is further integration: stronger evidence on what works, clearer standards for training and accreditation, and institutions resilient enough to bridge sectors over time. The very existence of these efforts suggests that negotiation is no longer merely a personal skill or an organizational asset. It is steadily building a more connected ecosystem and becoming a profession in its own right.

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