International Negotiation Competitions: Benefits and Adaptability to the Humanitarian Sector

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“Negotiation and discussion are the greatest weapons we have for promoting peace and development.”

-Nelson Mandela
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Abstract

International negotiation competitions are not a new phenomenon. These competitions have been growing in popularity worldwide and have several pedagogic benefits for the participants. Unfortunately, so far have been targeted only to students from the law or business fields excluding students from other fields, including the humanitarian students. These students are likely to follow a career where negotiations play a key role, nevertheless, they are not well prepared for it. The purpose of this thesis is to explore these benefits and the transferability of these competition models to the humanitarian sector. This thesis, therefore, seeks to answer the research question “What benefits can international negotiation competitions have for participants?” and “Could students in the humanitarian sector benefit from negotiation competitions adapted to the challenges they are likely to face?”. The study comprises of both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. An analysis of existing literature was undertaken alongside a pre-study survey to humanitarian students, 15 expert interviews and an online survey to participants to negotiation competitions. The thesis presents the opinions of a variety of experts and participants in negotiation competitions and reveals several benefits of participation in such events. These benefits include: skill development, multicultural environment, simulation of real emotions, feedback from judges, networking opportunities and promotion of the field. The findings also suggest that the transferability of this model to humanitarian students could be not only possible but beneficial, yet some barriers could arise. Explanation of possible barriers to this implementation and possible solutions to mitigate them are disclosed.

Keywords: negotiation competition, negotiation pedagogy, out-of-classroom education, humanitarian action, humanitarian sector
Abbreviations

MSF         Médecins sans Frontières
NGO         Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA        Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TNC         The Negotiation Challenge
UNHCR       United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA         United States of America
WNR         Warsaw Negotiation Rounds
1. Introduction

We have to learn to live in peace. It is easier to be aggressive, and peace is a personal choice. In order to communicate with others in a peaceful, constructive way, we must learn those skills. If we wish to transform communities, we must change the way violence is perpetuated, and how it is far too often utilized as a conflict resolution tool (see Oliveira, 2017). This is especially true between individuals, tribes and even between some countries, where heads of state see violence as a legitimate way to resolve differences between themselves and neighboring countries. This is common knowledge, but what struck me as interesting was the fact that in the corporate world, conflicts seems to be resolved in a different way, with parties discussing their issues and finding suitable solutions. Negotiating, sometimes extremely large deals that could jeopardize the future of the company, and generally without anyone becoming physically aggressive towards someone else.

I contemplated this for some time and came to the conclusion that the reason for this could be the fact that the people negotiating such deals for companies and corporations have tools and training that regular people do not have. These professionals possess negotiation tools that they have usually studied and practiced extensively. It is true that companies sometimes change negotiation teams, giving negotiators time to cool down when they reach a “boiling point.” It is also the case that often when people negotiate on behalf of a company, they might be concerned with keeping the future relationship and their own jobs intact, and it could be for this reason that the negotiation proceeds so peacefully. But this could also be true in the humanitarian arena. There is so much to lose from violent conflict resolution: lives, relationships, propriety, and hope.

So, if this is possible in corporations and companies alike, should we then attempt to transfer this knowledge to societies at large? And if so, how?
1.1 Aim, Objectives, and Research Questions

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between participation in an international negotiation competition, and the particular issues of skill development, and problem solving, with focus in the exploration and critical interrogation on how and whether this model could be successfully adapted to the humanitarian sector and the benefits that would bring to students.

Is it reasonable to consider negotiation competitions as a possible vehicle to increase global interest and engagement of people in constructive problem solving and conflict management, leading to the resolution and reduction of conflicts?

If negotiations competitions could help raise awareness and interest in the discipline of negotiations and motivate professionals worldwide to become ever better at this skill, could that impact people’s overall capacity to resolve conflict in a peaceful way? If we learn how to ask the right questions and look at the world through other people’s eyes, I am confident that many of the conflicts we are currently facing could be resolved.

Furthermore, if this skill set has proven to be so critical for the success of the largest companies worldwide, should we not then try to create more awareness of it in the humanitarian sector—a sector exposed to critical negotiation situations on a frequent basis?

In order to achieve this aim, the following research tasks were executed:

1. Analyze existing literature on the subject of negotiation competitions and pedagogy;
2. Pre-study survey to students in the humanitarian sector in order to assess their perception of their current negotiation skills, their opinion in relation to the need of negotiation skill for humanitarian practitioners, and their level of interest in improving in this area;
3. Survey students who have participated in negotiation competitions in order to collect their perceptions of the beneficial take-aways from their participation and where there is space for improvement of the students’ experience;
4. Interview experts in the field of negotiations—researchers, teachers, and professional negotiators—to determine their opinions of the importance these competitions can have for the field, their perceptions of the benefits and possible
limitations of these competitions, and their transferability outside of law and business;
5. Thoroughly analyze the collected data and cross reference it in order to draw conclusions.

From these aim and objectives, two research questions were generated:

1. “What benefits can international negotiation competitions have for participants?” One can expect that by putting people from all around the world together in a negotiation setup and allowing them to interact and negotiate real life cases during the competition will help them learn how to better resolve problems and conflicts together and will help them understand other points of view and other negotiation styles.

2. “Could students in the humanitarian sector benefit from negotiation competitions adapted to the challenges they are likely to face?” If, indeed, the benefits from participating in negotiation competitions and their impact can be validated, then one could argue that it would be only reasonable to assume that creating a negotiation competition tailored to the humanitarian sector would be a valid, logical, and favorable proposal.

This thesis is organized around the research questions and first provides the reader with a theoretical framework of the major themes examined, followed by the background on the subject of study, a description of the results of the data collection and interviews conducted, and a comprehensive analysis of the results obtained. It ends with some conclusions, and the last section raises questions for further research.

1.3 Theoretical Framework for the Study

Negotiations

Peace and economic order are strongly positively correlated with one another, and thus one can hardly exist without the other. Establishing and fostering peace and economic order internationally and sustainably should be the highest interest of all nations (Miller, 2018,p.1). Negotiations are used by political leaders worldwide as a means to reach agreements regarding some of the most important issues the world has
to deal with, such as human rights, peace, and economic prosperity. Why? Because negotiation is change and its principle is to challenge and change status quo (ibid). Being trained in negotiations is critical for the humanitarian field, and there is a power imbalance when only those in the fields of business and law receive proper training.

**Negotiation Competitions**

There are several negotiation and mediation competitions worldwide, most of them held locally, with only a few having an international component. Smolinski and Kesting identified seven main negotiation and mediation competitions worldwide. Most of these competitions are organized and hosted by academic institutions, with some being organized by associations or other entities. Most of the competitions identified by Smolinski and Kesting focus on graduate students, with only one of them being open to undergraduates (the Warsaw Negotiation Rounds (WNR)) (2013, p. 357).

Typically, they are only open to law students focusing on legal disputes, but some of the newer ones are open to business students and have a focus on business negotiations.

There are currently no specific negotiation competitions for students in other areas such as the humanities. These students from other disciplines could have access to some of the existing competitions, but in some of them would have to team up with a law student. Common to all competitions is the team component, with sizes ranging from two to five team members (Smolinski and Kesting, 2013, p. 357). All negotiation competitions identified by Smolinski and Kesting take place annually and have a strong educational focus on the development of basic negotiation and mediation skills and techniques. Furthermore, they expose students to cross-cultural communication and potentially different negotiation styles, ethical limitations, social norms, and business practices (ibid).

With one exception, all these negotiation competitions comprise several rounds of different cases, and role-plays are negotiated and mediated. The teams are evaluated through the rounds and the strongest teams face each other in the final round. The major differences between the competitions lie in the general type of role-plays used (distributive vs. integrative), the roles participants play (involved parties vs. mediators), and the type of problem/dispute central to the negotiation. The evaluation of the team’s performance is another difference between the negotiation competitions.
All competitions use judges to evaluate results, often in teams of two. In the case of TNC and the WNR, these competitions also use scored role-plays (ibid, p.360).

Somlinski and Kesting divided the main evaluation criteria used by the judges in these competitions into three main areas: preparation, process, and outcome.

**Preparation** relates, for example, to the capacity of the teams to analyze the case, find the problem, their interest and the counterpart’s interest, and craft a negotiation or mediation strategy.

**Process** includes the effectiveness of their teamwork, active listening skills, empathy, capacity to work collaboratively without giving in on their own interests and needs, flexibility, and negotiation skill, among other aspects.

**Outcome** has to do with the value created, value claimed, drafting of the joint contract, ethical behavior, and self-analysis.

Different competitions distribute distinctive weights to the various evaluation criteria, and some put special emphasis on specific skills, such as group work or value claiming. (ibid)

**Negotiation Skills**

Theoretically, negotiation is defined as “a process where two or more parties with differences which they need to resolve are trying to reach an agreement through exploring for options and exchanging offers” (Fells, 2010, p. 3). Negotiation skills are often a vital component in both employee and organizational success (Chapman et al., 2017, p. 940). Highly performing negotiators are considered skillful and their performance is measured by their outcome during the negotiation process (ElShenawy, 2010, p. 195). Much has been written on the benefits of developing negotiation skills and their impact on performance. For instance, according to ElShenawy, skillful negotiators add value to companies by effectively closing good deals, and firms are investing ever more in training their managers (2010, p. 192). But there is much heated debate regarding the effectiveness of negotiation training and, according to the researcher, the literature is rather divided. One side argues the absolute effectiveness of negotiation training, whereas the other doubts it. El Shenawy further adds, quoting Mastenbroek (1991), that the debate is fixed on the disagreement regarding
transferability of negotiation skills to real-life situations and the argument regarding personality and situational effect.

Measuring performance is a world of its own. It is not easy to measure performance since, to being with, one must have the ability to recognize good performance and distinguish it from poor performance. This thesis does not enter into the specific discussion of what makes for good performance. Clyman and Tripp have conducted a thorough analysis of that subject and more can be read in their work (Clyman and Tripp, 2000).

Compared with a class setting, negotiation competitions enhance and develop the participants’ negotiation skills (Smolinski and Kesting, 2013, p. 361). The purpose of competitions is to compare the relative negotiation skills of individuals and teams, and this plays an intrinsic role in motivating the contestants. This motivation manifests in both the time the contestants spend in preparations, usually ranging from two to six months according to Smolinski and Kesting’s research, where teams spent their free time in exhaustively reviewing significant literature and practicing, mostly through role-play-based negotiations (ibid). Smolinski and Kesting further found that the motivation level and quality of the negotiations in these competitions were much higher than in a classroom setting. These competitions further allow students to test their skills in a highly competitive international context that emulates the real business negotiations they might expect to participate in in the future and to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. (ibid) This thesis focuses on the skills developed as a result of competitions and their transfer to the real world.

**Negotiation Skills in the Humanitarian Sector**

According to Core et al. (2006, p. 686), “one lesson that has emerged from attempts at “peacemaking” is that negotiation skills are needed across all levels of civilian and government organizations involved.” Despite the increased focus on the critical role that negotiation plays in the humanitarian sector, very limited scholarship and analysis has been devoted to this issue, while at the same time a wealth of literature exists in other contexts (Grace et al., 2015, p.2).

Negotiations are of critical importance for the success of humanitarian operations, but they are extremely challenging. Even though
“Negotiators in different settings have encountered similar dilemmas and obstacles, the field of humanitarian negotiation has been slow to develop a body of research analyzing common issues faced, produce policy guidance that grapples in an in depth manner with the practical difficulties of humanitarian negotiations, and build professional networks both within individual organizations and across the sector so that negotiators can share best practices with one another“ (Grace, 2015,p.2).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in many high-stakes negotiations, such as negotiations to create an alternative to government treaties (as happened in 2012 in the Rio + 20 conference), negotiations required by NGOs to gain agreement from armed non-state actors to commit to abide to international norms, and negotiating access to conflict areas, among others (Roeder et al., 2013, p. 3).

According to Roeder et al.:

“NGOs have been at the heart of important multilateral negotiations and diplomacy since the nineteenth century, especially in the peace and environmental protection movements, as well as in sustainable development, human rights, and humanitarian relief operations in response to wars and destructive forces of nature. NGOs have also negotiated directly with governments to allow their own participation in international conferences.”

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) affirms that, in the humanitarian field, everything is open to negotiation (Magone et al., 2011, p. 5). They go on to say that “negotiation and diplomacy are at every level in MSF to support the operations. It goes from the person responsible on the ground for a project negotiating with local authorities, to the head of mission negotiating with national authorities in particular the Ministry of Health, to the headquarters, including the representation team of the international organization negotiating with governments, embassies, international organizations and in multilateral platforms.“ (Roeder et al., 2013, p. 9). Roeder et al. go on to claim that NGOs could be effective candidates to run negotiations that have traditionally been conducted by governments to solve major difficulties such as reversing poverty and significant structural problems, since governments usually have
their own strategic interests. But they also add that for this to be feasible and effective, NGOs must master negotiation and protocol techniques (ibid, p.11).

1.4 Methodology

In order to address the research questions, primary research was chosen as a research method. This method was chosen since there is close to no research published on the topic of study that could be analyzed. Through the use of both surveys and interviews the research elicits a variety of perspectives and adopts an holistic approach to address the field of negotiation competitions. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods provides breadth to the research and allows for in-depth discussions. Furthermore, a mixed method approach helps provide a wider range of information compared to mono-methods (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 185). In order to do so, 15 in-depth interviews with experts in the field of negotiations were conducted. The experts were carefully chosen so that the group would include people from three distinct areas: scholars and researchers (with a strong academic background and theoretical knowledge), high-ranking professionals (experts with decades of practical experience, some of whom are published authors on the subject), and businesspeople (who use negotiations as a tool in their day-to-day professional life). A list of questions was prepared in order to keep the interview focused on the areas of interest for the research questions (the full questionnaire can be found on Appendix 1). All the experts interviewed were people who had participated in an international negotiation competition, either as a coach, organizer, or judge. This was because it is not reasonable to ask people for an expert opinion on something they have not experienced firsthand, and doing so could result in unreliable information.

The expert interviews were done individually and in a fully structured fashion. The 15 experts were interviewed following a seven-question list. They were interviewed either in person or through Skype, and the interviews lasted on average 25 minutes. The interviews were recorded and further partially transcribed. This method allowed to directly seek answers to the research questions. The qualitative data from the interviews supplements and illustrates the quantitative data obtained from the surveys and the existing data from the previous research of Smolinski and Kesting (2013). This supported triangulation of results. The expert sample is small but high quality, with very experienced and highly regarded professionals in this field of studies.
Participants were contacted as well. They experienced the competition firsthand and could speak from their experience and their perception. I performed a quantitative survey of opinion regarding the various aspects of participating in the competition in order to complement the information collected from the experts. The survey aimed to reach as many of the students that had participated in negotiation competitions as possible.

A pre-study was performed on students in the humanitarian field, surveying them in order to address their perceived general level of negotiation knowledge and interest and how important they perceived this skill to be for their future. The survey, and pre-study survey can be found in Appendix 2 and 3, respectively.

Additionally, I went to Poland to observe the negotiation session and the judge discussions on the WNR competition held April 18–22, 2018. In the remaining sections of this thesis, the limited existing literature on the subject is compared with the results of my own data collection. I focus on the benefits of spreading these tools to the humanitarian sector even though I believe and acknowledge that students in every field of study could benefit from such an experience.

Study Participants

Fifteen experts were interviewed, ranging from academic professionals and researchers in the area of negotiations to high profile negotiators; a full list of their names and a brief biography can be found in Appendix 4.

The average length of the interviews was 25 minutes, with the longest being 55 minutes. The experts were asked seven questions that aimed to address the research questions of this thesis.

There were 76 respondents to the survey (30 female, 44 male, and 2 individuals who did not indicate a gender). All respondents were people who have participated in international negotiation competitions between 2009 and 2018. Participants ranged in age from 18–24 to 45–54 years old, and they were from 26 different countries.

There were 56 participants in the pre-study survey (43 female, 12 male, and 1 individual who did not indicate a gender). All participants have attended or are currently attending a master’s program in the humanitarian field (either the Network on Humanitarian Action or Humanitarian Action and Conflict program). Participants ranged in age from 18–24 to 55–64 years old and originated from 29 different countries.
Study Limitations

This study was conducted primarily based on data collected from personal interviews and surveys. According to Booth et al. (2008, p. 141), every time someone reports their own evidence, they change it. A researcher cleans it up and tries to make it more coherent. Even with seemingly objective quantitative data such as survey results, the researcher must decide what to count. With the interviews, I had to decide what to ask and to whom, and that could of course influence the results. In order to minimize the impacts of my chosen methods of research, I chose to interview only the best professionals in the field of negotiations who also had experience with negotiation competitions. Additionally, with the survey, I asked questions that would be as straightforward as possible and would not lead respondents in a specific direction.

Due to the time constraints of this research, I was not able to obtain a sample as large as I would have liked for the participant survey. Nevertheless, the response rate was relatively high, with 219 people contacted and 76 respondents, that is a response rate of 35%. The sample is reasonable considering the total size of the population being studied and is very heterogeneous, with respondents coming from 26 countries. Finally, limited prior research on the topic did not leave many existing studies to draw from.
2. Analysis

2.1 Background

Negotiation competitions are not a completely new phenomenon. They have been around for many years, with the first negotiation competition, the Williston Negotiation Competition by Harvard Law School, celebrating its 65th Edition this year, and the American Bar Association (ABA) Negotiation Competition now in its 34th year. Both these competitions are regional, drawing students solely from the USA and Canada. This thesis, however, focuses on international competitions due to their added benefits discussed later. The most established international competitions are the International Negotiation Competition for Law Students (begun in 1998), the International Academy of Dispute Resolution Mediation Competition (2001), the ICC International Mediation Competition (2006), the Negotiation Challenge (TNC) (2007) and the Warsaw Negotiation Round (WNR) (2010) (Smolinski and Kesting, 2013, p.356).

International negotiation competitions such as TNC (the first international negotiation competition in Europe) and the WNR have the goal of gathering the world’s best student negotiators from business and law schools, allowing them to compare their negotiation skills, and in so doing prepare them for the complex negotiations they will face in the real world (TNC, 2018). During the competition, students from the world’s leading universities compete with each other in realistic negotiation situations. I have myself been a participant, a coach, and a jury member in these competitions and have seen firsthand their impact on skill-building and the benefits of the multinational environment. Joining the Humanitarian Action and Conflict program left me wondering why these competitions should be made only for business and law students, when students from Humanitarian Action would most likely be faced with challenging negotiations in their future careers and could benefit from this experience too. Yet, they didn’t have that opportunity.

A pre-study conducted on a sample of current and previous students in the humanitarian field demonstrated that even though these students go through some type of negotiation training, out of all students surveyed only 16% felt very confident in their negotiation skills, with the majority, 56%, feeling only somewhat confident, and the remaining not confident at all. Clearly, this raises fundamental concerns regarding their preparedness to face negotiation situations confidently in their futures jobs. Yet,
although they do not feel very confident, the total sample considered negotiation skills
to be very valuable for professionals in the humanitarian sector, with 53% considering
it even extremely valuable. This is a topic explored in-depth by Grace on his study
regarding humanitarian negotiation, where he addresses the “negotiation cognizance”
gap in the field. His finding are in alignment with the pre-study findings and reveled
a sector filled with professionals feeling rather unconfident in their negotiation skills.
This is clearly exemplified by one humanitarian interviewee in his study, “I would not
say that I even had a framework for what negotiation meant in the back of my mind
when I started my career… I didn’t have a deep understanding of all the complexities
of working with local governments, let alone non-state actors, let alone some of the
high complex various interest groups at the community, state, or national level.” (2017,
p.23).

Although considerable research has been devoted to in-class negotiation
simulations and the pedagogical benefits they bring, less attention has been paid to
negotiation competitions. Only one scientific article has been published that directly
relates to the topic of pedagogical benefits of these competitions. This article is by
Smolinski and Kesting and discusses the benefits of competitions for negotiation
pedagogy. In their research, they concluded that there are many benefits to these
competitions and that the main benefits fall into three categories: skill development,
networking opportunities, and the promotion of the field (2013). Although their
research was pioneering on the topic, that also meant that there was much that was not
explored in-depth, such as the transferability of their negotiation competition model to
other fields of study and the impact of these competitions beyond the direct impact to
the students.

With regard to negotiation competitions, there were two other studies published.
A study conducted by Bond focused specifically on mediation and culture. He
discussed the ICC International Mediation Competition and its culture and explored
the interplay of cultural diversity and standardized rules within the competition. Bond
asked important questions as to how culture is defined and argued that drawing on the
concept of culture to define the differences between “us” in the West and “them” not
in the West is risky, further arguing that the individual is not the object of some
deterministic cultural programming but rather is a subject able to adapt culturally to a
greater or lesser degree. He concluded by suggesting a more integrative approach to
the subject of mediation and culture in competitions, an approach that does not address
one aspect in isolation (Bond, 2013, p. 324). Bond’s contribution is certainly important and raises interesting question with regard to the pre-defined cultural expectations from the West.

An interesting article by Delicado et al. also touches upon the culture, but it was not its central point. Delicado et al. discussed the assessment of negotiation competitions. The researchers defended the premise that the assessment can determine the success of the competition in reaching its pedagogic goals and that factors such as the cultures, world views and individual preferences of the judges are seeming challenges in creating a reasonably objective and fair scoring system (2012, p.214). Their research touched on a very significant point that must be discussed: assessment of competitions is a challenge and deep thought should be given to the choice of evaluation criteria. Both these studies bring the field further but nevertheless still leave open an important gap—the impact of these competitions and their transferability to other fields. These are critical questions that must be asked. The limited amount of research done on the subject leaves a wide untouched arena to be explored. This thesis therefore seeks to answer those questions, and to do so in a comprehensive and reliable manner.

2.2 Benefits of Negotiation Competitions

The analysis of the expert interviews and survey highlight several positive effects of participation in a negotiation competition, and experts share the opinion that competition participation should be encouraged for as many students as possible.

There are six main benefits mentioned by experts and/or survey respondents, analyzed below. The approach used to extract and analyze the perceived benefits of negotiation competitions from the expert interviews was the quasi-statistical approach of Robson and McCartan (2016, p. 461). Using this method, the most frequent words or phrases used by the experts in regards to the benefits and limitations of negotiations competitions where analyzed. In order to fully explore the perception of participants of negotiation competitions on their experience, this research asked respondents to choose the top three benefits of participation on a negotiation competition, shown in Figure 1.
Amongst the benefits mentioned, the most prevailing and recurring ones were the following:

**Skill Development**

Experts say these competitions give students a forum to develop skills that are not otherwise tested at a university. It allows them to practice, and with practice comes more self-confidence and experience. Furthermore, students get to practice with people they are not acquainted with, making the exercise more realistic. According to one of the experts,

“People learn from their mistakes and here’s a great opportunity for you to make them in a safe environment.”

One expert mentioned that teams spend months preparing for the competition and that teams typically partner with a coach so that they become more professional. This regular practice and effort will inherently improve their skills. Furthermore, the fact that students have the chance to practice their skills and compare themselves to other students also provides them chances for improvement. The survey conducted among participants confirms the experts’ opinion on this topic. The results, as seen on figure 1, indicated that 92% of the students considered practicing their skills as one of the top three benefits of participating in a negotiation competition; furthermore, 81%
agreed that their participation in a negotiation competition improved their problem-solving skills and capacity to resolve conflicts. These results are equally highlighted by Smolinski and Kesting, who also identified skill development as a key take-away from negotiation competitions, adding that even though students in negotiation courses are generally highly motivated, adding a competitive aspect to negotiations seems to result in a qualitatively different experience that they believe helps participants further develop and enhance their skills (2013, p.261).

**Multicultural Environment**

Several experts mentioned that the opportunity to negotiate with people from different backgrounds and with different negotiation styles was an evident advantage for the students compared to most in-class simulations.

“There is a benefit in practicing with students who are not in the same class. You have students from various different backgrounds and countries, and they have also been taught a little bit differently, I just think that is more realistic. Practicing with a wider range of counterparts is helpful.”

Students surveyed are in agreement with this finding. A multicultural environment was the second most mentioned benefit of participating in an international negotiation competition by students. An overwhelming 71% of respondents considered it one of the top three benefits of participating in an international negotiation competition. This is also demonstrated by the number of different countries of origin of the respondents of the survey, 26 countries.

**Feedback from Judges**

It was considered a meaningful benefit for the students that they had access to feedback from the judges. The judges are all people with great experience either as researchers, lecturers, or practitioners in the field, and they provide the students with in-depth constructive feedback on their performances and areas of possible improvement. This was considered by many experts as one of the top advantages for students’ development and is in fact in alignment with previous research arguing that
feedback is a vital part of supporting student learning when given in a constructive manner (Bruford, 2015).

Typically in international negotiation competitions, students receive a debriefing session. When this happens depends on the competition. At the WNR, the debrief is given immediately after each negotiation round, where the judges, usually in teams of two, provide both teams constructive feedback and allow them to also share their perception of the negotiation and of the other team if appropriate. Experts say that this allows students to get to know themselves and their own negotiation style better and also to became aware of where they can improve. This was also the students’ perception, with the survey results indicating that feedback from the expert judges was the third most valuable benefit perceived by the students.

Smolinski and Kesting arrived at similar findings and considered the post-negotiation debriefing to be an integral and important part of the negotiation teaching, enhancing the participants’ experiential learning (2013, p.363).

Networking

The networking possibilities created by these events should not be underestimated. Experts mentioned the benefits of the networking not only between the students, where they get to meet peers from all over the world, but also with the experts and organizers. Participants reach out and keep contacts with the experts and use that opportunity to ask them for career advice and mentorship.

“Some of the students might be finding mentors, I am writing references for some of them. There is a sort of professional development piece of it as well.”

Some of the experts further mentioned that these events had networking benefits for themselves too. They can exchange ideas, research topics, and teaching methods with other colleagues who share the same passion. The networking benefits of these competitions were also well documented by Smolinski and Kesting, who saw these competitions as an opportunity for instructors to optimize their teaching approaches and methods, further encouraging them to try new ones (2013, p.362).
Additionally, the student survey indicated that networking was one of the top take-aways for participants, with 55% of the surveyed sample selecting it as one of their top three take-aways. Some participants left additional comments in the comment section where they mentioned the event as a great place for networking and advancing their careers.

**Simulating Real Emotions**

Since the teams want to win the competition, agreed the experts, there end up being some real emotions involved in the process that are not so often present in a classroom setting but are very valuable for learning purposes. In a classroom, students know each other, and there is less likely to be a high level of emotion involved in the simulations. Experts saw value in putting students through negotiation cases that emulate real life. They believe that it puts students in situations of pressure similar to what they can expect in real life, where results really matter, and that this will force them to deliver results.

“This is the only place I know of that you can simulate the negotiation process with real emotions involved. People come here from different parts of the world and the motivation to win is quite high, so it is a much better situation than in a normal training or workshop.”

The experts went on to say that in a normal class or training, students know what to expect, and they will negotiate with their peers, people whom they know and are generally less inclined to get into conflict with. The student survey produced mixed results in this category. In the comment section some students expressed the view that the competition was an opportunity to prepare themselves for real-life business cases with high levels of pressure involved, but others found the negotiation simulations too far from reality. It could be argued that no simulation will ever be able to emulate real life, because it is in fact a simulation. Nevertheless, as almost any negotiation simulation will involve dealing with people, this means emotions will be involved (Fisher and Shapiro, 2006, p. 209).
**Promotion of the Field**

This topic came along in many of the expert interviews. Experts agreed that participation in an international negotiation competition helps promote the field and raise awareness. They mentioned that the promotion of the competitions internally in the universities helps raise awareness of the field, alongside internal competitions held in a growing number of institutions in order to choose the team/s that will representing them abroad in the international negotiation competitions. Furthermore, according to some of the experts, the fact that the students have the chance to meet and talk to experts in the field creates an awareness of possible career paths in this field that students might otherwise not be aware of.

“They are exposed to a lot of people that are really passionate about the field. They are exposed to the experts, working in an interesting range of professions that all relate to negotiations. I think that piece can inspire students to consider whether they want to focus in negotiations either in their academic career or professional career.”

Smolinski and Kesting claimed in their study that the fact that competitions raise awareness of the field also means that this will increase student interest in enrolling in these courses (many times optional), therefore emphasizing the role of these courses in the academic curriculum and helping secure resources necessary for research on the subject of negotiation to be conducted at the university (2013, p.362).

In the survey, some students mentioned that their participation made them want to work in this field, and of the total sample, 61% considered it likely that they would pursue a career in the negotiation field. Of those, 37% considered it very likely. Furthermore, 13.5% of the respondents were already working in the field.

2.3 **Transferability to the Humanitarian Sector**

Experts agreed that the transferability of the competition model and its adaptation should be a valid possibility and a beneficial one for students. Indeed, in the words of various interviewees:

“It is 100% applicable. Life is negotiating, whether you know it or not. It doesn’t matter the field. Mathematicians need to negotiate the same way as
construction workers. This field is part of life. The humanitarian field could benefit largely.”

“All fields require resources and when you require resources and there are problems to solve, negotiations has a mindset, has a framework for how to prepare and how to approach these problems.”

“If you have Humanitarian Studies all over the globe that is a way to meet up with people and then you can focus on negotiations roles or topics, and maybe you can even have a hybrid event where you do have the cases on one hand and discussions about topics of interest on the other.”

The experts interviewed believed that these skills are of use for people in all fields, but especially in the humanitarian field, were negotiation is so present and the consequences of a miscarried negotiation can impact the lives of so many. The survey of the students presented a similar view, where 97% of respondents thought that the competition model could be adapted to the humanitarian field.

The pre-study asked the students in the humanitarian field the same question. Of the total sample, 93% thought the model could be adapted to their field. They were further asked what benefits they expected such an event to bring them. Experience, improved confidence, networking opportunities, and the chance to become more aware of what sorts of situations they might be likely to face in the future were some of the most often mentioned benefits, but the list was immense. As one humanitarian student put it: “The benefits would be learning by doing. Even if you can never be entirely prepared you can be more prepared than nothing for a situation in real life.” and another one added “It would be a benefitting experience for anyone who is interested in working with different or conflicting parties and not only prepare students for potential situations, but also elevate their confidence in said situations.”

2.4 Possible External Impacts

Experts were positive regarding the possible long-term impacts such an event could have in conflict resolution and the reduction of conflicts in the world. They agreed that by improving the skills needed to be a good negotiator (active listening,
empathy, and communication, to mention a few) in as many people as possible and by raising awareness of the field, we would be improving the capability of people to resolve conflict in a more respectful and sustainable way.

“I think the world would look a lot better if people would use win-win and integrative solutions. I think almost all problems could be resolved in a peaceful way.”

Some of the experts who had experience in training people in negotiation added that they had seen this happening:

“I have firsthand experience with that, I could name so many instances were negotiation training made a dramatic change and resulted in resolving long-standing conflicts and created immense value.”

Survey results were in alignment with the experts’ opinion, with 78% of students agreeing that improving negotiation skills of future leaders could result in a reduction in conflicts.
3. Discussion

3.1 Benefits of Negotiation Competitions

The six main benefits that the experts claimed to be a result of participation in an international negotiation competition are supported by the previous research of Smolinski and Kesting (2013). These findings suggest that there are many benefits for students who attend negotiation competitions. Those benefits are perceived not only by the field’s experts but also by the participants themselves. Provided that students do prepare well in advance and are committed to the process, there are a wide range of positive outcomes that can be derived from this experience. Possibly, not all people will benefit equally from participation in such an event; the benefits will depend on the person’s individual commitment to the competition and attitude towards it. In negotiations, individual skills, personalities, negotiating styles, and/or profile matter (Grace, 2017, p. 1). Below I discuss the most relevant of these six benefits in-depth.

**Multicultural environment**

The global economy is the result of millions of small and large cross-cultural negotiations (Brett, 2014, p. 71). It took negotiations for Starbucks to enter China, and it takes negotiations for MSF to enter Yemen. But intercultural negotiations are inherently more difficult and typically generate lower joint gains than intracultural negotiations, due to strategic misalignment between the parties (ibid, p.88). While the relationship between culture and negotiation outcome is not discussed here, any opportunity to practice negotiation in this setting should be beneficial for students. This is strongly supported by the results of this study, as mentioned earlier, where multicultural environment was identified by 71% of survey respondents as one of the top three main benefits of participating in an international negotiation competition.

This environment could be especially beneficial for humanitarian students who are likely to face predominantly intercultural negotiations in their future careers, due to the inherent nature of the field (Grace, 2017). With this in mind, there are some reservations to consider in relation to cross-culture competitions. Most competitions use the American “interest-based” negotiation model, in which parties clearly present and defend their interests, while at the same time showing respect and appreciation for the interests of the other party (Bond, 2013, p.319), largely following the concepts of
the influential book *Getting to Yes* (Fisher et al., 1986). It is therefore argued by some scholars that interest-based negotiations are not culturally universal and thus not applicable all over the world (see, e.g., Alexander, 2009 and Brigg, 2008). They see this as a dominance of the Western values and claim the invalidity of any universally valid model. These theories argue in terms of cultural absolutes and ignore the sense of context (Bond, 2013, p. 323). Bond argues that in this context, there must be a certain negotiation model to be followed in order to allow for all students to negotiate based on the same standard, and the “interest-based” is the most studied at this point. This argument is supported by research from Grace (2017, p. 25) where he discussed with interviewees the “interest-based” model of negotiations in the humanitarian field. As one of his interviewees put it: “Most of those principles [from *Getting to Yes*] are directly applicable to humanitarian work… You want to get to win. And if you don’t give them something you won’t get anything. There has to be a compromise at some point.”, other of the interviewees concurred and noted that in their experience this framework has been useful. (ibid)

There may be another consideration to introduce. After preliminary research, it came to light that humanitarian studies are mostly offered in Western countries, which is clearly an obstacle to replicating the multicultural environment experienced by business and law students negotiating with people from over 26 countries. A possible way to mitigate this would be to open the competition not only to students but to humanitarian professionals worldwide.

**Simulating Real Emotions**

In any negotiation, emotions will be involved. According to Fisher and Shapiro (2006, p.209), negative emotions tend to create an obstacle to negotiations, while positive emotions can act as an asset to negotiations. Research suggest that emotions should not be suppressed or ignored; instead, careful preparation in emotions is suggested as a way to enhance negotiation effectiveness (ibid, 2006, p 211). These results seem to support the theoretical assumption of Smolinski and Kesting’s study. They found that the level of motivation and the overall intensity and quality of the negotiations are typically much higher in a competition than in a classroom setting (2013,p.361). They further discuss emotionalism, the high level of emotions that contestants often express. This is a phenomenon frequently observed by other scholars (they mention for e.g.,Druckman and Olekalns, 2008) and seems to be common in
competitive settings. According to the researchers, “raised voices, excited gestures, clear signs of disappointment, frustrations, anger and even tears are integral elements of negotiation competitions” (Smolinski and Kesting, 2013, p.364).

Since emotions play a key role in negotiations and their outcome (Olekalns and Druckman, 2014, p. 456), one can argue that only by dealing with real emotions and feeling real emotions will students have a realistic perception of what might await them in real-world negotiations. Negotiation competitions, therefore, could provide the student a good opportunity to experience this.

Feedback

A brief definition of feedback must proceed a discussion of the importance of feedback in this context. The term “feed-back” was coined in the 1860’s during the Industrial Revolution to describe the way the outputs of energy, momentum, or signals are returned to their point of origin in a mechanical system (Stone and Heen, 2014, p. 8). After World War II, the term began to be used in industrial relations when discussing people and performance management (ibid). Today, although a frequently used term, feedback does not have a clear meaning (Price et al., 2010, p. 278). For the purpose of this discussion, I therefore consider feedback as information provided regarding a person’s performance that is used as a basis for their improvement. The goal of good feedback is to help students become aware and translate that awareness into fruitful behavioral change (Forsythe and Johnson, 2017, p. 850). In this study, not only was this identified as a benefit by almost every expert, but it was also mentioned by 55% of participants as a key benefit. These results are supported by current studies indicating that students place a high value on their feedback, as they recognize that it will improve their chances of success (Brown et al., 2014, p. 126). Research continually confirms the power of feedback on students’ motivation and performance (Forsythe and Johnson, 2017, p. 850).

According to Smolinski and Kesting, feedback can help the participants understand and reflect on their behavior during the negotiation and consequently improve their skills (2013, p.363). The researchers go on to report that in TNC, feedback is given to all students in a group debrief session at the end; the reason for this is to prevent reputation effects on the teams in the following rounds. However, there is a downside to this, they claim. At the end of the competition it is less likely that one will remember everything about the negotiation, especially the earlier rounds,
leading to some students finding it difficult to relate to the given feedback. This could therefore reduce the learning effects as a trade-off to improving the realism of the competition (ibid).

Despite the advantages of feedback, there are some limitations that have been mentioned in the background section and were the subject of a study by Delicado et al. They warned about the influence that the personal views, culture, and background of members of jury can have on the way they give feedback and assess the negotiations. As one surveyed student put it, “sometimes the judges don't speak their minds. They try to be overly positive, instead of telling people the truth about their performance if it was poor.” Problems such as this might always be present to a certain extent, but there are steps that can be taken to limit them. For instance, guidelines and checklists can be produced (they are already in some of the competitions) for judges to follow when assessing performance and giving feedback. Furthermore, members of jury can be briefed beforehand and agree, as a group, on how to assess certain behaviors and which guidelines to follow.

3.2 Transferability to the Humanitarian Sector

Results were very positive and encouraging with regard to the adaptability of the competition model to humanitarian students. There are many situations where these skill improvement for humanitarian practitioners could be of benefit, below are some examples of possible negotiation situations that humanitarian professionals might come across.

**Logistics** – NGOs find themselves often collaborating with external logistic service providers. A study conducted by Bealt et al. (2016, p. 122) exposes some of the many challenges of this collaboration. The research shows that the private sector has a plethora of resources and knowledge that the humanitarian sector does not and that lack or inadequate training of staff and poor relationship building are big obstacle to a good collaboration. Humanitarian agencies will inevitably have to negotiate contracts with these external service providers and their lack of training is a situation that might leave them totally at odds with commercial sector practices. (ibid)

**Goods**- For a nonprofit organization, efficiency can be defined as fulfilling its mission at the lowest cost (Ecer et al., 2017, p. 142). In order for this to the possible, the person in charge of purchasing will have to negotiate good prices, good terms and
good contracts. Furthermore, there is an ever increasing pressure from donors for both transparency and strategic use of resources (Bealt et al., 2016, p. 120).

**Interagency** – Interagency competition is a phenomenon that has been studied (see Stirrat, 2006 for more information). In times of competition, nonprofits need to work to convince other actors that they, rather than other agencies, deserve resources. (Barman, 2002, p. 1191) In order to do so, they have to negotiate with other agencies the role that they will play in the field, the more preeminent the role they negotiate, the better chances the nonprofit organization will have of showing good work to the donors, therefore justifying the donation (Stirrat, 2006, p. 14).

**Field Negotiations** – Field negotiations can be about anything from convincing tribal elders to protect woman at risk of rape while collecting water to discussions with armed non-state actors to allow access for doctors. (Stirrat, 2006) They could also include negotiating with United Nations agencies, rebel forces or a government in order to obtain information needed to assist refugees return home (ibid).

**Diplomatic Negotiations** – Negotiations also need to be made with governments and minister officials in order to get the actual permits for relief workers to do their work, or for a ship or planes to deliver goods. These negotiations can be quite challenging too. (Roeder et al., 2013, p. 88)

With negotiation so present in the work of an humanitarian practitioner, one would expect negotiation and mediation training to be a staple of any education in the humanitarian field. In order to verify this, I analyzed the curriculum of 10 top programs in the humanitarian and conflict field. Table 1 on Appendix 5 presents an overview of the findings. Interestingly, not all programs include courses in negotiations, and the majority of the programs offer courses that touch upon negotiations but do not have them as a stand-alone course. This could be explained by the large number of courses that need to be taught and the fact that negotiation is still earning its place as a legitimate stand-alone field of study.

Nevertheless, the humanitarian sector, at least at the organizational level, has begun to develop the negotiation training of staff, and several organizations such as the Center of Humanitarian Dialogue, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have produced guidance materials on humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2017,
The launch of the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation was another notable recent development in the field. (ibid).

Even with training, there is always an added value of allowing people to practice a new skill in a safe yet challenging environment, such as a competition. If these students do not have proper negotiation training, how will they be able to compete? And what sort of benefits would they really take away from the experience if not properly trained? These are questions that must be considered. One suggestion would be to offer students of the field who wish to participate free online training that would take them through the theoretical material of negotiation best practices, step-by-step as they would learn in a classroom setting. Additionally, a platform to connect students from different schools and provide them with sample cases that they could negotiate through Skype or any other similar means could be created, allowing them to practice for competitions through remote role-play.

This could be beneficial for students, as remote role-plays also provide valuable teaching and learning experiences (Smolinski and Kesting, 2012, p. 491). Research indicates that e-negotiations can differ greatly from face-to-face negotiation and present different challenges. According to Smolinski and Kesting, and drawing on the information from Harvard Business Analytical Services (2009), “the already widespread use of electronic communications by individuals and organizations is expected to increase in the future” (ibid). This trend resulted in the recent introduction by TNC of a remote negotiation as part of the competition. This decision was made with future trends in mind, giving students an opportunity to prepare and practice for these increasingly common remote negotiation scenarios.

Provided that setting up such an online training would be possible, this factor should no longer present a major obstacle to implementation.

**Why a specific competition for the Humanitarian Sector?**

Overall, negotiation competitions are a unique tool for negotiation pedagogy and have many benefits as it has been shown. Yet, as one of the experts brought to attention, even if students from the humanitarian field should participate in existing competitions, they would not receive the direct benefit of negotiating/mediating cases designed to emulate the situations that they might find themselves involved in after graduation, like some of the examples mentioned in the previous section. The simulations of current competitions are designed for the target participants—in this
case, business or law students. One could argue that they could possibly still benefit from skill development, feedback, a multicultural environment, and networking but would not receive the full benefit compared with a specific humanitarian-oriented negotiation or mediation competition. As one of the experts cautioned “…eventually this [participation of humanitarian students in a business or law oriented negotiation competition] could backfire. If they have no training or the training they had is not relevant to the kinds of simulation that a competition like this does, and they were to go and do really poorly, it might have the opposite effect, it might really negatively affect their confidence.”

These negative consequences need to be considered. If students from the humanitarian sector should perform badly, as the expert pointed out, that could actually make the whole experience negative, depriving the students from the inherent benefits. This could possibly make them less secure of their negotiation skills.

There are further reasons to why a specific international humanitarian negotiation challenge could be more appropriate for the students. This would allow the participants to negotiate cases that could directly relate to their future careers. There are several possible scenarios that could be developed and turned into role-play cases adapted to the types of negotiations likely to be undertaken by an humanitarian practitioner. This could bring pedagogical benefits for students in this particular field.
4. Conclusion

Benefits and Suitability of Negotiation Competitions in the Humanitarian Field

In summary, this study shows that international negotiation competitions can be a valuable tool for humanitarian students and practitioners alike. Humanitarian practitioners often fall into negotiator roles without warning. There are generally no specialized humanitarian negotiators to draw upon when negotiation needs arise, but this is a core competency that every humanitarian practitioner working in the field should have and might need (Grace, 2017, p. 1). Regarding the first research question of this study, “what benefits can international negotiation competitions have for participants?”, findings suggest that negotiation competitions could provide a platform with several benefits, including improved skills, experience in a multicultural environment, networking with like-minded people and professionals with inspiring positions in the field, and learning from the feedback provided by experts. Moreover, these competitions will not only better prepare these students and/or professionals for these negotiation roles, they will also provide them with a platform for meeting new people and exchanging ideas. These competitions could possibly include workshop sessions to discuss interesting topics of relevance for the humanitarian profession, adding even more value to the experience.

As a response to the second research question, “could students in the humanitarian sector benefit from negotiation competitions adapted to the challenges they are likely to face?”, the results of this research were quite positive regarding the applicability of such an event to the humanitarian field of study.

Possible Limitations to Consider

Nevertheless, creating such an event also involves some challenges. First, an international humanitarian negotiation competition would imply that students/participants already have previous negotiation training. Unfortunately, such training is not offered in all institutions nor by all organizations. A possible suggested way to mitigate this problem would be to offer comprehensive free online training to the participants. Second, since humanitarian studies are still a quite new phenomenon, they are not offered worldwide, which could compromise the benefits of a cross-cultural experience. This could be addressed by offering not only students but also humanitarian practitioners worldwide the opportunity to participate. Finally, there is
work involved in organizing and promoting such an event. New cases have to be written, evaluation and feedback guidelines need to be created, and experts in the field need to be willing to be part of the event as judges and team coaches.

Final Remarks

Even though negotiation competitions alone are unlikely to solve all of the world’s problems, there are benefits to these competitions worth considering. This study has shown that these competitions could offer a great complement to in-class or potentially online training, providing humanitarian practitioners with added confidence in their skills and more experience. These finding highlight the importance of investing in increasing the level of negotiation confidence of humanitarian practitioners through training and practice. After all, skillful negotiators are important assets in the humanitarian field and make very important deals with significant impacts for their operations.

4.1 Future Research Suggestions

The results of this study suggest that negotiation competitions offer several benefits to participants and that this concept could be adapted to the humanitarian field. These findings raise several interesting questions for future research. First, it would be interesting to further explore the adaptability of negotiation competitions to other fields of study. Promoting negotiation skills outside the traditional arena could lead to a more even balance of power. As primarily law and businesspeople have been developing these skills, they have a power advantage compared with people who have not developed these skills. Secondly, while this study focused on the benefits of these events, some limitations came to light in the expert interviews. It would be interesting to further research the limitations of negotiation competitions and how they could be effectively mitigated.

Lastly, while analyzing the survey results, I could see that many of the participants of earlier years had chosen to work in the field of negotiations, and the vast majority displayed an interest in doing so in the future. It would be interesting to research more deeply the impact of these competitions as promotors of the field and research their “multiplier effect.” The “multiplier effect” is described as an increase in some activity that starts a chain reaction that generates even more activity. In negotiation competitions, this often manifests through participants becoming coaches,
trainers, or consultants for example, and it would be interesting to study what role the competitions actually play in this chain of events, if any.

NOTES

1. For practical reasons, in this thesis, I mostly use the term “negotiation competitions”, but I acknowledge that several competitions also have the element or focus on mediation;
2. All quotations are taken for expert interviews. For details on the interview process please see the methodology section;
3. I considered “future leaders” because the students coming to these competitions are the top students of their institutions and likely to become some of tomorrow’s leaders in their fields and jobs;
4. The term Western is used to denote USA, Canada and Western Europe. A online search was made for programs in Humanitarian Action and the results were almost exclusively in the geographic areas mentioned above.
5. Quotation was taken from participant survey comment section, to improve readability grammar and spelling mistakes were corrected.
6. These courses were selected through a search of the programs considered top programs according to www.HumanRightsCareers.com, and according to other reviews of the top humanitarian programs.

REFERENCES


Appendix

Appendix 1: Expert Interview Question List

1. Please describe your experience in the field of negotiations.
2. Please describe your experience with negotiation competitions.
3. What are, in your opinion, the main benefits of negotiation competition?
4. What are, in your opinion, the main weaknesses of negotiation competition?
5. Do you think that participating in negotiation competitions increases interest in the negotiation field?
   5b. Do you think that participating in negotiation competitions improves constructive problem solving and conflict resolution skills?
6. Do you think that having more people globally training negotiations skills could contribute to the reduction or resolution of conflict?
7. In your opinion, how applicable is the negotiation competition model for students or practitioners in the humanitarian field?

Appendix 2: Survey for the Participants of Negotiation Competitions

1. Gender
   1. Female
   2. Male
   3. I prefer not to answer

2. Age
   1. Under 18
   2. 18-24
   3. 25-34
   4. 35-44
   5. 45-54
   6. 55-64
   7. 65+
   8. Prefer not to answer

3. Country of origin

4. What are, in your opinion, the main benefits of participating in a negotiation competition (choose the top 3)
1. Multicultural Environment
2. Practice of my skills
3. Feedback from the jury
4. I get to travel
5. Meet new people
6. Good for my CV
7. Other (please specify)

5. What are, in your opinion, the main shortcomings of negotiation competitions?

6. Do you think that the Negotiation Competition model could be adapted to students in the Humanitarian field?
   1. Yes
   2. No

7. How likely/unlikely is it that you will follow a career connected to the negotiation field?
   1. Very likely
   2. Likely
   3. Neither likely nor unlikely
   4. Unlikely
   5. Very unlikely
   6. I am already working in the field

8. In case you would follow a career in the field, would you prefer to work for private corporations or use your negotiation skill set to resolve internal conflicts (local/state/government)
   1. Corporations
   2. Internal Conflicts
   3. I don't know
   4. Other (please specify)

9. Do you agree with the following statements:

   Participating in a Negotiation Competition has increased my motivation to study this topic further on my own time (read/practice).
   1. Strongly Disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Don't agree nor disagree
   4. Agree
   5. Strongly Agree
   6. I don't know
Participating in a Negotiation Competition has improved my problem solving skills and capacity to resolve conflicts.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Don't agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree
6. I don't know

Participating in a Negotiation Competition has increased my overall interest in the field.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Don't agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree
6. I don't know

I see the overall experience of participating in a Negotiation Competition as a positive one.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Don't agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree
6. I don't know

The increase of negotiation skills in the leaders of tomorrow can lead to a reduction of conflicts.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Don't agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree
6. I don't know

10. Which year did you participate in a Negotiation Competition?

Appendix 3: Pre-Study Survey for Students in the Humanitarian Field

1. Gender
   4. Female
   5. Male
   6. I prefer not to answer
2. Age
   9. Under 18
   10. 18-24
   11. 25-34
   12. 35-44
   13. 45-54
   14. 55-64
   15. 65+
   16. Prefer not to answer

3. Country of origin

4. How valuable do you consider negotiation and/or mediation skill to be for professionals in the humanitarian sector?
   1. Extremely valuable
   2. Very valuable
   3. Somewhat valuable
   4. Not so valuable
   5. Not at all valuable

5. How important is it for you to develop your negotiation and/or mediation skills?
   1. Extremely important
   2. Very important
   3. Somewhat important
   4. Not so important
   5. Not at all important

6. How likely is it that you would spend your own personal time studying to further develop these skills?
   1. Very likely
   2. Likely
   3. Neither likely nor unlikely
   4. Unlikely
   5. Very unlikely

7. How confident are you on your current negotiation skills?
   1. Extremely confident
   2. Very confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Not so confident
5. Not at all confident

There are several negotiation and mediation competitions worldwide, designed to give students a chance to further develop their skills and experience negotiating/mediating real life cases with people they don’t know, in a multicultural environment. The goal of these competitions is not only to competition *per se*, but to give students the chance to develop their skills and network in a place of like minded people. Based on this information, can you answer the following questions.

8. Do you think that the Negotiation Competition model could be adapted to students in the Humanitarian field?
   1. Yes
   2. No

9. How likely/unlikely would it be for you to participate in an international negotiation/mediation competition designed for Humanitarian students?
   1. Very likely
   2. Likely
   3. Neither likely nor unlikely
   4. Unlikely
   5. Very unlikely

10. What do you think that the benefits of participating in a negotiation/mediation competition could be for students in the Humanitarian and conflict resolution field?

**Appendix 4: Experts Biography**

**Anna Helmich-Zgoda**

CEO Empiriana. She teaches at the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities and lectures in negotiations and conflict resolution. Furthermore, Anna is an experienced business coach, ICF coach, mediator and assessor. She has conducted research in the field of social psychology, in terms of manipulation and influence, and coping with stress and stage fear in situations of social exposure. So far, she has
conducted over 6,000 hours of workshop trainings in areas such as negotiation communication conflict resolution and mediation.

**Aldis Sigurdardóttir**
Aldis is completing her doctorate studies at Reykjavik University School of Business, concerned with negotiation in business-to-business contexts. Before commencing her academic career, she gained eighteen years of managerial experience including negotiating complex agreements as a director of companies in both public and private sector. She is the founder and executive director of a consultancy company in Iceland, from 2013-present where she is head negotiator in challenging negotiations on behalf of her clients, companies in various sectors, consulting on strategic decisions and/or management training for specific challenges related to negotiations and communication. She is also a lecturer in the university of Twente in the Netherlands.

**Alexander von Reden**
Alexander von Reden is a highly experienced transaction lawyer and has long-standing experience advising German and international companies and financial institutions on the full spectrum of corporate, banking and capital markets law. He also focuses on dispute resolution, representing banks as well as listed companies in corporate and banking cases, including post-M&A disputes. Alexander regularly advises management board members and other corporate organs on liability issues.

**Andrew McKernan**
Andrew is a layer with a passion for negotiations. He currently works with The Gap Partnership where he travels worldwide to plan, prepare and execute some of his clients more important negotiations. Furthermore, Andrew owned and ran his own negotiations coaching and training company in Germany.

**Aðalsteinn Leifsson**
Aðalsteinn is currently the Director in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in Geneva and has previously worked for the European Commission and the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He has taught courses on Negotiations and International Business in Executive MBA programs and MLL programs as well as in Executive Education and he is an Assistant Professor at Reykjavik University. He was the
Chairman of the Board of the Icelandic Financial Supervisory Authority and has served on a number of boards of private and public institutions and expert committees. He is passionate for (international) negotiations and has taken part in a number of projects that have involved a major refocusing of firms and institutions.

**Ed Brodow**

Ed Brodow is considered the world’s top speaker on the art of negotiation. Since 1987, Ed has enthralled more than 1,000 audiences worldwide. A nationally recognized television personality, Ed Brodow has appeared as negotiation guru on some of the most prestigious tv channels. Furthermore, he has published seven books.

**Ingvild Ericson**

Ingvild is a lecturer at the Department of Law and Governance at the BI Norwegian Business School where she teaches negotiations. Previously she has worked as a practicing lawyer and a judge in court. She mediated hundreds of conflicts and helped people negotiate agreements and avoid going to court.

**Janusz Gwiazdowski**

Coordinator for Negotiations at the President of the Energy Regulatory Office, Januz carries out professional activities based on his knowledge gained from legal and psychological studies, enriched with numerous trainings and practice acquired through the years. He represents individual and institutional clients in negotiations, as well as assists parties in court proceedings - as a permanent court mediator - in negotiations in the field of family law, civil law, criminal law, labor and social and economic insurance.

**Melissa Manwaring**

**Melissa Manwaring** is a lecturer in the Management Division at Babson College, where she has taught negotiation in the graduate program since 2002 and co-developed the inaugural Fast Track MBA (hybrid online / face-to-face) negotiation course in 2008. Manwaring has published a number of negotiation-related articles and book chapters and serves on the editorial board of Negotiation Journal.

**Milan Prilepok**
Milan is a Co-Founder and the global leader of McKinsey & Company’s negotiations service line. Milan’s client service focuses heavily on the topic of negotiations, having led client workshops for over 10,000 participants in 200 organizations across 30 countries globally. Additionally, Milan conducts research on institutional maturity and practices around negotiations infrastructure, as well as individuals’ approaches and mindsets in negotiations. Milan has published short articles on negotiations and speaks at conferences, industry forums, and roundtables on negotiations. Milan also teaches an MBA course on negotiations at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Nora Madjar**

Nora Madjar is an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Connecticut School Of Business. She received her Ph. D. in Business Administration from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. She was also a Fulbright Scholar in Bulgaria in 2011.

Professor Madjar teaches courses in organizational behavior, managing creativity and innovation and negotiations for both undergraduate and MBA students.

**Peter Kesting**

Peter Kesting is co-founder and scientific advisor of The Negotiation Challenge, one of the leading negotiation competitions in Europe. Peter is an associate Professor in the Centre of Organizational Renewal and Evolution, Department of Business Administration in Aarhus University. He is a researcher in the areas of negotiation, innovation and business model change, employee-driven innovation amongst other topics and has authored or co-authored at least 88 articles.

**René Pf fromm**

René is a clinical professor at the University of Bonn, Bucerius Law School and the German University of Administrative Sciences. He is a faculty member in executive education and leadership programs and regularly speaks on negotiation topics at universities and conferences around the world. René is the author of “Effektives Verhandeln – Strategien und Taktiken für Anwälte” (Effective Negotiating –
Strategies and Tactics for Lawyers), and of “Verhandlungsführung für Praktiker” (Negotiation Management for Practitioner). Furthermore, René owns his own legal negotiation consultancy practice.

Wojciech Sambor
Agency Sales Leader at MetLife. Managing Director at Key Negotiators, a negotiation consultancy agencies in Poland. Wokcjech coordinates and conducts negotiation training, coaching and manages consulting projects. He has been involved in negotiation tournaments for several years as a member of jury and role-play writer.

Þórvarður Kjerulf Sigurjónsson
Þórvarður has an MBA from Reykjavik University and currently works as a international commercial director for TrackWell. Negotiations are part of his daily work, negotiating not only contracts with customers and partners but also with government agencies. Furthermore, he has been coaching teams for negotiation competitions for three years, and has been a participant himself.
### Appendix 5: Table 1 – Negotiation Training in Humanitarian Study Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Negotiation course?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grenoble École de Management</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>MSc in Humanitarian Programme Management</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOHA - Network on Humanitarian Action</td>
<td>Eight delivering universities in Europe</td>
<td>Join Master’s degree program in International Humanitarian Action</td>
<td>Yes, but to different extent depending on the choices made by the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Groningen</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>International Humanitarian Action</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Manchester</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>MA Humanitarianism and Conflict Response</td>
<td>Yes, Humanitarian Diplomacy and Negotiation in Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bath</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Humanitarianism, conflict and Development</td>
<td>Yes, Negotiating the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Durham</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>MSc Conflict Prevention and Peacbuilding</td>
<td>• Peace Processes and Political Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conflict Mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• International Negotiation as Instrument in Conflict Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Genève</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Master of Advanced Studies in Humanitarian Action</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fordham University</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>M.S. in Humanitarian Studies</td>
<td>Elective: Conflict Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>MSc Humanitarian Action and Conflict</td>
<td>Yes, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Roads University</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>MA in Human Security and Peacebuilding</td>
<td>Yes, Development, Diplomacy and Crisis Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>