



**EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS IN LAND ACQUISITION NEGOTIATION:
INSIGHTS FROM A BRAZILIAN CASE**

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>The research article examines civil engineering land acquisition negotiations using qualitative case study methods, showing how emotional connections between parties affect their negotiation strategies. The landowner's strong emotional bond to his property led to a sale price exceeding market value, creating a conflict between his rational assessment of the property and his emotional valuation. The research demonstrates that organizations implemented structural innovations through Special Purpose Entities (SPEs), non-monetary options, and financial safeguards to generate value as they evolved from distributive bargaining to integrative negotiation. The research findings show that organizations must address both physical and psychological factors, as they demonstrate that successful teamwork is achieved through readiness combined with relationship development, using objective assessment techniques.</p>	<p>Negotiation; Civil Engineering Case Study; Integrative Strategies.</p>

Introduction

Negotiation, as a field of research, has attracted scholars' attention over the past decades (Dias, 2019; Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1981; Kissinger, 1969; Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Navarro & Dias, 2024; Pruitt, 1981; Raiffa, Richardson & Metcalfe, 2002; Rubin & Brown, 1975). Past research has examined negotiation as a communication process (Acuff, 1993; Dias, 2016; Salacuse, 2003, 2006; Schatzki & Coffey, 1981; Shell, 2006), as mediation (Zartman, 1988), and as a critical element in managerial decision-making (Bazerman & Moore, 1994) and business negotiations (Dias, 2023; Dias, Almeida, Silva, Russo et al., 2022; Dias, Lafraia, Schmitz et al., 2024; Dias, Leitão, Batista & Medeiros, 2022). Academic research across different fields demonstrates that negotiation functions as a complex system that combines logical elements with social aspects and outside environmental influences.

The study examines Type II negotiation, as defined by Dias (2020), which requires advanced methods to handle multiple interests and to evaluate alternatives and possibilities through purposeful communication strategies. The negotiation process in civil construction settings requires more than distributive bargaining because it requires integrative methods that unite the physical and emotional needs of the parties. According to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a

contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context. The research design of this study follows a qualitative case study approach to examine a civil engineering sector negotiation to acquire a strategic housing development project site.

People use their emotional connection to objects and the individual worth of these objects to determine their negotiation approach. The landowner faced an internal conflict between financial gain and preserving his ancestral land, rendering standard property distribution methods ineffective. The engineering company needed to accelerate its business expansion and achieve financial success, so it created a Special Purpose Entity (SPE) and used non-monetary options and financial protection measures to negotiate new terms. The new method turned the negotiation into a collaborative process that followed the rules of Type II negotiation. The unit of analysis (Yin, 2018) is the negotiation process between the engineering company and the landowner, treated as a solitary, holistic case study. The author observed the negotiation process to understand how emotional factors and financial considerations create intricate barriers. The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix is depicted in Figure 1:



Figure 1 The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix
Source: Dias, 2020. Reprinted with permission

2. Methodology

The research uses Yin's (2018) qualitative case study design to study actual negotiation scenarios that combine emotional elements with economic factors. The case study method was selected because it enables researchers to study intricate systems, revealing their interconnected elements and the whole negotiation of organizational frameworks. The unit of analysis is the negotiation between a civil engineering company and a landowner over the acquisition of a strategic plot of land. The negotiation exists as an independent, complete case study, allowing researchers to examine how material interests interact with psychological attachment and integrative strategies. The author collected data through direct observation and active participation, enabling him to observe the negotiation process from start to **finish**. The research method used thematic analysis to study negotiation processes, drawing on established negotiation theory frameworks, including BATNA, ZOPA, and interest-based negotiation. The research design employs rigorous methods to establish a solid foundation for examining how emotional bonds affect negotiation outcomes and civil engineers' capacity to use integrative methods to address their conflicting requirements.

3. Case Presentation

3.1. Background and Context

The negotiation under analysis took place in the civil engineering sector and involved the acquisition of a strategically located plot of land. The engineering company sought to expand its housing development project, with an estimated General Sales Value (VGV) of R\$ 55 million, at Minas Gerais state, southeastern Brazil. The property passed to him through inheritance, while he kept the farm headquarters as his most treasured possession because it held all the important family history. The emotional connection he formed with the property required him to set a minimum asking price above market value, thereby starting a negotiation process that pitted his emotional and logical thinking against each other.

3.2. Initial positions

The engineering company bought the land directly because they needed it immediately to protect their project's financial stability. The Landowner, however, demanded a price well above the market average. His position resulted from two factors: his control over the central land between his siblings' acquired territories and the emotional burden of being separated from his property. The differences between the parties created a distributive conflict that threatened to undermine the ongoing negotiation.

3.3. Identification of Interests

The process revealed that the Landowner maintained two separate interests, which became evident during the process. The landowner pursued maximum financial returns because he predicted future market-value appreciation in the property. The property's historical value to his family made him want to reduce his sense of losing his family's heritage. The company focused on material interests because it wanted to achieve fast acquisition and make the housing development profitable. The negotiation process needed a complete transformation to determine which core interests motivated each party.

3.4. Strategic Shift: From Positions to Interests

The engineering company shifted its approach from defending its original stance to identifying the underlying interests held by both parties. The organization applied integrative negotiation principles, which required them to create value before they could begin distributing it. The company identified a new opportunity for creative solutions by recognizing how psychological factors affected the Landowner's worries about the project.

3.6. ZOPA and BATNA

The negotiation process needed the team to show different integrative solutions. The first was the creation of a Special Purpose Entity (SPE), which transformed the Landowner from a seller into a project partner. This option established a Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) between 10 and 60 percent participation. The Landowner could choose to exchange future land parcels, thereby maintaining a connection to the property while protecting his family's heritage. The proposal presented two financial protection systems: a performance-based bonus structure linked to the project's final VGV value, and a minimum-return protection mechanism.

The analysis of alternatives showed that the company could proceed with a partial expansion as its best alternative to a negotiated agreement, reducing the projected VGV by 30 percent while harming overall

synergy. The Landowner's BATNA was to wait for future market value growth. Still, this strategy would create problems with accessing cash and require property upkeep, and make his property more likely to lose value compared to surrounding new developments. The proposed solutions showed that both parties needed to reach an agreement that would lead to improved outcomes for them.

3.6. Deal

The final agreement established approximately 35 percent participation for the Landowner in the SPE, combined with the non-monetary options and financial safeguards previously discussed. The solution produced superior results than both BATNAs because it combined financial success with psychological need fulfillment. The company bought the required land for expansion through a deal that paid the Landowner while keeping him connected to the property.

3.7. Lessons Learned

The case shows that emotional asset negotiations need methods that go past the standard practice of reducing value through discounting. The path to success requires three fundamental elements: preparation, building rapport with others, and understanding how emotions affect the situation. The negotiation process would have benefited from starting with relationship-based elements, including recognizing the Landowner's emotional bond and presenting alternative solutions before discussing monetary terms. The use of independent consultants to present objective criteria would also have enhanced trust and reduced resistance. The case demonstrates that civil engineering land value depends on both historical and emotional aspects that owners bring to their property, so negotiations need to handle both physical and emotional aspects.

4. Findings

The research data showed that the Landowner faced two opposing needs between his physical requirements and his emotional needs. He worked to achieve the highest possible financial gain while he predicted the property value would increase in value according to the rational-economic negotiation approach which Raiffa Richardson and Metcalfe (2002) and Rubin and Brown (1975) described. The psychological aspect required him to reduce his feelings of loss because he sold a family heritage property which Salacuse (2003, 2006) shows negotiation exists as a relationship-based process that depends on trust and identity and emotional understanding. His dual nature raised his minimum acceptance level beyond what the market could offer thus establishing a negotiation space which required more than distributive tactics to succeed as Fisher Ury and Patton (1981) explained about positional bargaining failures when fundamental interests are involved.

The negotiation process demonstrated that interest-based negotiation serves as an essential tool which leads to successful negotiations. The engineering company moved its attention away from the price dispute to discover solutions which would solve both the technical and psychological aspects of the situation. The Special Purpose Entity (SPE)¹ introduction enabled the Landowner to shift from being a seller into a partnership role which produced value before any distribution took place according to

¹ *Special Purpose Entity (SPE)* is a legally distinct company created to manage a specific project or asset, isolating financial risk from the parent organization. In this case, the SPE allowed the Landowner to become a partner in the housing development, ensuring both financial participation and symbolic continuity with the property. In Brazil, Special Purpose Entities (*Sociedades de Propósito Específico – SPEs*) are primarily governed by Law No. 6.404/1976 and the Law No. 10.406/2002 (Civil Code).

Lax and Sebenius (1986) who defined "creating and claiming value." The future lot exchange functioned as a symbolic connection between historical and current times because the agreement included further provisions which established mutual protection through risk management and trust development systems. The introduced solutions demonstrate how parties can use integrative negotiation methods to find mutually beneficial solutions which surpass all possible outcomes for each side according to Dias (2020) who studied Type II negotiations that combine multiple interests with various alternative solutions.

The evaluation of BATNAs revealed that the negotiated terms provided better outcomes than all available alternative options. The company would have faced two negative outcomes from its BATNA which involved partial expansion with decreased VGV because it would damage both profit margins and project sustainability. The Landowner faced two major drawbacks from his BATNA because he would lose money and face maintenance expenses while his property value decreased relative to other properties. The final agreement which included 35 percent SPE participation together with non-monetary options and financial protection mechanisms outperformed both BATNAs. The research results show that integrative negotiation approaches create value by producing agreements which surpass all possible alternative solutions thus confirming the cooperative approach which Pruitt (1981) and Dias (2019) described.

5. Discussion

The research results from this case study help develop negotiation theory by demonstrating how reason and emotion affect business deal negotiations. Research studies have shown that negotiation functions as a communication system (Acuff, 1993; Schatzki & Coffey, 1981; Shell, 2006), which supports this finding in the current situation. The engineering company decided to recognize the Landowner's emotional connection to the property by adding non-financial compensation options, which aligns with Salacuse's (2003) theory that negotiation depends on building relationships through mutual understanding of personal values and identities.

The situation shows how integrative negotiation methods work in practice. The SPE establishment, together with multiple contract options, follows the principle of Fisher Ury and Patton (1981), which advises parties to create alternative solutions that benefit all involved. The parties achieved this transformation by expanding the negotiation topics beyond price negotiations. The research confirms Lax and Sebenius (1986), who proved that parties can reach advantageous agreements that meet their physical and emotional needs through innovative negotiation approaches.

The situation demonstrates Type II negotiations according to Dias (2020), as it involves managing multiple interests and solution possibilities. The engineering company needed to negotiate with the Landowner through a process that combined financial needs with emotional factors, while accounting for potential risks and possible advantages. The case study method, which Yin (2018) supports, enables researchers to study negotiations through detailed analysis of actual situations.

The case shows that preparation focused on rapport development remains vital, as noted by Dias (2016) and Navarro & Dias (2024). The negotiation process should have started with a focus on relationship dynamics, as this approach would have established trust and reduced opposition. The process would have become more robust through the use of independent consultants who would establish unbiased evaluation criteria, as Bazerman and Moore (1994) studied how organizational standards affect managerial choice processes. The case shows that civil engineering land value depends on both

historical and emotional aspects of property ownership, because successful negotiations between parties require an understanding of both the physical and emotional aspects of the land.

6. Implications

The research results deliver substantial value, helping develop theoretical knowledge and enabling the practical use of negotiation techniques. The research findings validate that negotiation serves purposes beyond transactional needs because it requires knowledge of human psychological needs and individual self-concepts (Salacuse, 2003, 2006; Dias, 2016). The research example shows how managers use decision-making methods that follow Bazerman and Moore (1994) and Dias (2019, 2023a–d) by applying objective standards and methodical procedures, as well as Special Purpose Entities, which create legitimate agreements while reducing potential prejudices. The research example shows Type II negotiation methods based on Dias (2020) Four-Type Negotiation Matrix and situational approaches (Dias, Lopes & Duzert, 2020) because it needs complete solutions to manage its intricate interest systems. The research investigates negotiation techniques while establishing connections with two new fields: stakeholder relationship management (Dias, 2025) and organizational learning and training value creation (Carvalho & Dias, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; Carvalho, Dias & Schmitz, 2025). The similarities between these two fields indicate that civil engineering negotiation strategies can help organizations develop their corporate training programs, employee engagement initiatives, and organizational development methods. The interdisciplinary nature of negotiation research becomes more evident through these similarities.

7. Research Limitations

The research study has specific limitations that prevent it from achieving its objectives. The analysis is based on a single case in the Brazilian civil engineering sector, which restricts generalizability. The research benefits from direct observation and participation methods that the author used, but these approaches might yield results influenced by personal biases. The study lacks external validation because it did not use external interviews or documentary evidence for triangulation purposes. The Brazilian cultural and economic environment lacks direct applicability to other business sectors or geographical areas, according to Dias (2020a, 2020b, 2020c), who conducted comparative negotiation research. The research findings require careful interpretation because they apply only to the specific situation studied.

8. Conclusion

The research shows that civil engineering negotiations over land acquisition require more than price negotiations, as they involve complex distributive bargaining processes. The Landowner developed his negotiation approach and his minimum acceptable offer through his emotional bond and psychological needs, demonstrating that business negotiations extend beyond financial deals because they require knowledge of personal relationships and psychological factors (Dias, 2021; Dias & Panzarini, 2025). The engineering company achieved better results than both parties' BATNAs through its process transformation, which started with positions, then moved to interests, and added a Special Purpose Entity, non-monetary options, and financial safeguards. The research supports the cooperative approach to negotiation, as described by Fisher & Ury (1981), the value creation principles of Lax & Sebenius (1986), and the Type II negotiation framework developed by Dias (2020). The research adds

value to negotiation theory by demonstrating how emotional and rational elements work together to produce successful cooperative outcomes through proper preparation, relationship development, and the use of unbiased standards. The research findings create new applications for negotiation studies, now applicable to civil engineering, real estate, organizational environments, stakeholder management, and corporate training. The process shows that successful negotiation requires both analytical abilities and emotional intelligence to establish a new field that unites logical, creative, and emotional thinking.

Future Research

Future research should study organizations across various business sectors, including logistics, consultancy, healthcare, and technology, to determine how different sectors can use integrated approaches (Cunha & Dias, 2021; Dias, 2023b; Macedo & Dias, 2025). Research studies need to investigate the impact of emotional bonds on business negotiations involving assets that hold emotional value in family businesses, cultural heritage protection, and artistic creative industries (Moura & Dias, 2025; Gasparini, Vieira & Dias, 2025). Quantitative research designs would improve qualitative results by analyzing how business profitability, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainable partnership development change when using integrative mechanisms (Dias, 2020b; Pereira & Dias, 2025). The research by Dias (2020) on negotiation models, mediation, and trust should be further investigated to examine how decision-making biases affect emotional interests, and how Navarro & Dias (2024) recommend using preparation and stakeholder mapping in negotiation training and practice. Research should progress by combining rational-economic models with relational and psychological elements to create negotiation as a scientific discipline that requires artistic knowledge.

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