MedAIting with the Mediators: Exploring Aligned Agent Interventions to Resolve Challenges in Mediator Workflows

JUNIOR FRANCISCO GARCIA AYALA, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
PAULINE WEE, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
AZZA ABOUZIED, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
NITESH GOYAL, Deepmind, Google, USA

Mediation is a form of conflict resolution in which a neutral third party, the mediator, supports the disputing parties to reach an acceptable outcome. Based on interviews with 21 professional mediators, we identified three central challenges in their work: invisible labor, improvisation, and leadership without authority. We found that mediators' practical, context-sensitive actions often diverge from their formal training. This divergence stems from extensive invisible work to cultivate a constructive environment while directing conflict (and conflicting parties) without legal power to enforce change. We then examine a range of agentic designs as case studies that could help manage these central challenges. We contend that embedding AI agents into mediation is likely to reconfigure, rather than eliminate, these fundamental challenges. Agents would require mediators to oversee, defend, and at times push back against them introducing additional visible and invisible labor related to planning, oversight, and explanation. Such designs can introduce a "prioritization challenge": agents have to determine whose values take precedence — the lead-mediator, co-mediator, parties, host institution, or paying client—and any decision will misalign with at least one stakeholder. As values evolve and conflicting parties may even act in bad faith, this "prioritization challenge" will complicate a pluralistic multi-alignment problem.

ACM Reference Format:

Junior Francisco Garcia Ayala, Pauline Wee, Azza Abouzied, and Nitesh Goyal. 2026. MedAIting with the Mediators: Exploring Aligned Agent Interventions to Resolve Challenges in Mediator Workflows. In *The 2026 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '26), June 25–28, 2026, Montreal, QC, Canada.* ACM, New York, NY, USA, 30 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3805689.3806726

1 Introduction

Mediation is a voluntary and private dispute resolution process in which a neutral mediator helps parties reach their own negotiated settlement agreement [44]. Many countries require mediation before any litigation [39]. Despite growing demand [19], mediation faces persistent challenges with facilitating effective communication, negotiation coaching, and process management. These remain understudied and poorly addressed, despite significant technological investment [42, 67]. AI and LLMs are increasingly positioned as potential solutions to mediation challenges [90]. We evaluate this premise by mapping mediation workflows and needs from empirical data and assessing the feasibility of AI support. While AI-assisted online conflict resolution shows promise [51], little is known about how AI can support in-person mediation. Through semi-structured interviews with 21

Authors' Contact Information: Junior Francisco Garcia Ayala, juniorgarcia@nyu.edu, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Pauline Wee, pkw2013@nyu.edu, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Azza Abouzied, azza@nyu.edu, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Nitesh Goyal, niteshgoyal@acm.org, Deepmind, Google, USA.

FAccT '26, Montreal, Canada

ACM ISBN 979-8-4007-2596-8/2026/06
https://doi.org/10.1145/3805689.3806726

professional mediators (§3), we identify three core struggles: (i) invisible administrative and emotional labor; (ii) gray areas and knowledge gaps that force improvisation in charged situations; (iii) and the need to steer mediation without formal authority through persuasion, trust-building, and communication. We found that these struggles are prevalent throughout all stages of their mapped workflow (§3).

Next, we present three fictional case studies grounded in interview data to support a speculative design exercise examining how AI agents (§4) might address these mediators struggles. Rather than resolving them, agentic aids reconfigure invisible labor, improvisation, and mediator agency, raising human–agent alignment questions (§5) that motivate three future research directions:

(i) Re-Alignment: In a multi-party, somewhat murky, hierarchical mediation process, where an initial plan can obstruct much-needed improvisation to respond to new information, an agent needs to identify how to seek and find re-alignment against a pre-defined universal system without increasing *invisible work*.
(ii) Agency-Management: In the presence of adversarial actors (who represent non-adversarial stakeholders) that aim to sabotage the process, an agent must take on a steering role and improvise without a conflict of interest while preserving the *limited agency of the mediator*.
(iii) Risk-Management: In high-risk circumstances, like mediating inter-personal violence, agents' lack of self-awareness of limited capabilities and harmful misjudgments can deteriorate the fragile trust between a mediator and the parties involved, leading to identifying *risk-management strategies*.

Our work contributes a timely empirical and speculative examination of mediation, showing how AI agents interact with invisible labor, improvisation, and mediator agency. We demonstrate that, despite growing interest, AI agents are unlikely to function as effective mediator collaborators without addressing fundamental human–agent alignment challenges inherent to mediation work.

2 Related Work

We review related work on mediation, dispute resolution technologies, human–AI collaboration and alignment, and speculative design.

Mediation: Theory and Practice. Conflict resolution methods span a spectrum, from legally enforced court rulings to alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approaches, which differ in the degree of party agency and mandated cooperation [8, 61, 93]. Among ADR methods, mediation preserves participant autonomy through non-binding, voluntary outcomes. It is commonly defined as a process in which a neutral third party, lacking decision-making authority, assists disputants in reaching mutually acceptable agreements [8, 61, 94, 95]. These features make mediation an effective and balanced conflict-resolution approach [41], with outcomes perceived as fairer and more likely to preserve group relationships than arbitration [54, 64]. In the U.S., mediators typically complete about 40 hours of training covering mediation theory and process [46, 98]. Handbooks commonly structure mediation into two stages: preparation, where the mediator develops an understanding of the conflict, and an in-the-room stage focused on facilitating dialogue toward resolution [8, 61].

Technology and AI in Conflict Resolution. Technologies have been increasingly used to aid mediation[7, 55, 78, 108], especially in online settings [37]. Online dispute resolution (ODR) commonly relies on tools such as document sharing, video conferencing, and conflict resolution support systems [30, 35, 103, 109]. More recently, LLMs have enabled new approaches to conflict resolution, including simulated rehearsal tools [82], assistance with drafting and reformulating mediator responses [90, 102], and game-theoretic simulations of negotiation [1, 9]. Recent research also examines LLMs in conflict-laden decision-making contexts such as hiring, procurement, finance, and collective dialogue [34, 49, 51, 79, 110], while also identifying risks such as escalation in simulated conflicts [74]. Together, this literature highlights the societal stakes of LLMs in conflict contexts; our work instead centers mediation and the individual human stakes involved.

Despite this progress, mediation institutions have historically provided limited guidance on regulating technology use in practice [18]. Prior work has speculated about integrating advanced tools—such as emotion-sensing wearables and smart assistants—into mediation [18], some of which have since materialized in training tools, mixed-reality mediation environments, and applied systems in online communities [2, 7, 37, 84, 99]. Although draft guidelines for generative AI in mediation have recently emerged [68], they have yet to be enforced.

Human-AI Collaboration and Alignment. Prior work has developed theories and guidelines for human–AI collaboration that emphasize complementary strengths: humans contribute judgment, sensitivity, and contextual reasoning spearhead emotional conflict transformation [16] , while AI systems contribute information processing at scale and speed [43, 63]. This has led to design principles for effective human–AI interaction, human-AI team composition and co-creation with generative systems [4, 96, 100, 107]. AI agents represent a further shift due to their ability to act with minimal human input [70], motivating exploration of their integration into domains such as software development and creative work [21, 106].

As AI systems become increasingly more capable, they often achieve orthogonal goals to achieve the specific reward function. These orthogonal goals may prove detrimental to the human values behind the reward function [29, 56], and AI-alignment practitioners are aiming to mitigate potential harms from these *misalignments*. Techniques like Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF) [53, 69] aim to mitigate these risks. Alignment methods, like RLHF, that rely on human annotators remain limited, as annotator discretion results in inconsistent and sometimes conflicting value representations [17].

More recent work advances interactive and pluralistic alignment approaches that aim to represent diverse and competing values within a task, including tools and methods for group-level value modeling [5, 20, 31, 36, 38, 50, 83, 86, 87, 91]. We build on this work to examine how AI agents might support mediation workflows through speculative design (§4).

3 A Mediator's Workflow

Our goal is to understand what makes mediation-based conflict resolution successful by focusing on the challenges mediators face and the realities of their practice. To study these users, who must influence outcomes without formal authority, we conducted interviews with 21 professional mediators

Participants and Method We recruited participants through cold outreach to practitioners listed in public conflict-resolution directories [6, 33], as well as referrals from law school faculty and a local mediation organization. We then continued recruitment through snowball sampling [25] until reaching theoretical saturation, that is, when no new themes emerged across interviews[1]. Participants averaged 13.6 years of professional experience (SD = 11.1; range: 1–38 years). They specialized in workplace conflicts (9), family or divorce disputes (7), business disputes (6), and small-claims court (4), with many practicing across multiple domains. 16 of the 21 interviwed mediators practiced in the United States and 5 were based in the United Arab Emirates. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes; all but one were recorded and transcribed. Two authors also attended a day-long mediation training offered by a local organization, supplementing the interview data with observational notes. We analyzed the transcripts using an abductive coding approach [92, 97], combining deductive codes drawn from existing mediation theory with inductive codes that emerged from the data. After an initial round of exploratory coding, the team refined and consolidated the codes through analytic memo discussions and affinity diagramming.

From this data, we identify three stages in the mediator workflow (Figure 1) that deviate from canonical models in the mediation literature [8, 15, 32, 41, 60, 61, 66]; mediators often adapt and evolve their practices to fit specific cases. We characterize these deviations as three underlying *struggles* that persist across the workflow, along with associated *needs* mapped to each stage (Figure 1):

[1]See Appendix A.1.2 for details on mediators' backgrounds and expertise, Appendix A.1.1 for the interview questions, and Appendix D for the codebook.

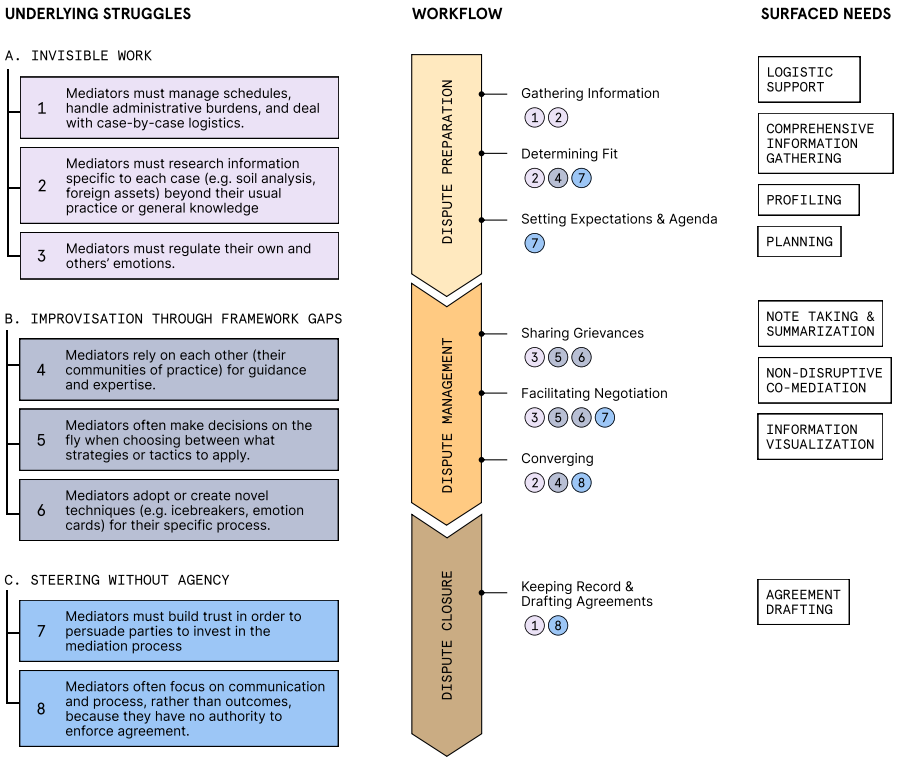

Fig. 1. An overview of a mediator's workflow and a summary of underlying struggles and surfaced needs.

A. Invisible Work: Outside of mediation itself, mediators manage invisible *"administrative burden"* [Juan], including scheduling mediation sessions, preparing strategies to support negotiation [Leo], and managing their own emotions and those of the parties to maintain neutrality. As Mae, a mediator for small claims and workplace conflicts, explains: *"I aim to be the thermostat, not the thermometer. This means setting the tone of the room rather than reacting to others' emotions."*

B. Improvisation to fill Framework Gaps: Despite roughly 40 hours of required training in the U.S. [46, 98], mediators often encounter situations that exceed formal guidance and require improvisation. As Zara, a workplace mediator, explains, *"Sometimes I'll break rules if it feels right, and I've done it in front of my boss. ... But then it'll work out beautifully,"* highlighting how mediators rely on instinct to navigate gaps in existing frameworks.

C. Steering without Agency: Unlike judges, mediators lack the authority to impose or enforce agreements and are typically trained to persuade parties of the value of mediation and build trust to enable productive dialogue, shifting emphasis from outcomes to process. As Mike observes, *"people come to mediation just to get things off their chest ... they agree to disagree ... they go back to the workplace with no written resolution ... they let it go."*

Next, we describe each step within the three stages of the workflow; While the focus of this work is dispute management (§3.2), we will briefly describe dispute preparation (§3.1) and closure (§3.3).

3.1 Dispute Preparation

3.1.1 ***Gathering Information.*** Mediators often begin cases with minimal information. To address these gaps, mediators rely on pre-mediation interviews to gather essential context and screen for issues such as safety and readiness. The interviewees identified two key needs at this stage: logistical support for tasks such as contacting parties, scheduling, and gathering consent, and improved mechanisms to collect more complete case information. As Juan notes, much of the work involves *"menial labor... trying to reach parties,"*, suggesting that automating voicemails and consent forms could *"really reduce our caseload"*. Juan also believes that "robots on the phone ... are annoying to talk to," and prefers text-interfaces to gather richer information upfront.

3.1.2 ***Determining Fit & Complexity.*** Before mediation begins, mediators assess case fit, complexity and what resources will be required [21/21]. Mediators uniformly agreed that case fit primarily hinges on parties' willingness to participate [21/21]. Beyond that, institutional mediators have limited discretion over case intake and must follow organizational guidelines [4/21,9/21]. Zara proposed preemptive AI profiling of parties and using tools such as *"the Thomas Kilmann assessment"* to assess conflict styles. This motivated our design of an AI agent that meets with parties in advance to help determine fit (§4.3), while retaining a human-in-the-loop, since *"AI is still not very good at reading subtle nonverbal cues"* [Mae].

3.1.3 ***Setting Expectations and Agenda.*** Once fit is determined, mediators focus on preparing parties for the process by clarifying what mediation is, the mediator's role, and what is expected of participants [21/21]. Mediators then work to establish an agenda that structures the conversation [21/21] around *"areas of agreement, disagreement, and action items"* [Emma]. Together, expectation- and agenda-setting legitimize the mediation process and build trust [21/21]. Mediators invest in explanations, co-design, and subtle environmental cues, such as room-setup or even providing snacks.

Mediators expressed a need for drafting support when developing agendas, envisioning LLMs producing an initial draft that they would review and refine [4/21]. As Emma notes, *"these needs assessments take so long ... I would just take my raw notes and use ChatGPT to help summarize them."* These requests, particularly for multi-stakeholder community mediation, motivated the design of our planning agent (§4.1).

3.2 Dispute Management

3.2.1 ***Sharing Grievances.*** Once agendas are set, mediation begins with parties sharing grievances to surface underlying issues. As Kai describes, *"the party that brought the complaint go[es] first… then the opening statement of the other party."* While many mediators prefer joint openings to help parties *"learn how to communicate with each other again"* [Kai], others use shuttle diplomacy — *"go[ing] from one room to the other"* — when parties are uncomfortable sharing space [Sophie,Owen]. Caleb prefers initial private meetings to uncover deeper drivers of conflict: *"One person might say, 'I need the temperature turned down,' but what they're emotionally charged about ... maybe their uncle passed away three years ago from pneumonia."* Mediation format varies by context: small-claims [4/21] and workplace mediations [9/21] typically involve joint sessions, while family, divorce [7/21], or business mediations [6/21]] more often use separate formats due to discomfort between parties. These initial exchanges can be emotionally intense, requiring mediators to regulate both parties' emotions and their own. As Ethan explains, *"I try and maintain a very calm posture, ... I don't provoke emotion even higher."* Mae emphasizes that mediators often encounter parties *"at one of the lower points of their lives, and they do tend to fight the way children fight. I need to make sure that I'm staying calm and that I'm not being dragged into their space."* Even with preparation, mediators may be caught off guard as conflicts unfold gradually —- *"like an onion,"* as Ivy describes — highlighting the ongoing emotional labor of this stage.

Surfaced Needs. Mediators expressed a need for real-time support, including live note-taking and question generation to help parties open up [10/21]. Zara notes, *"If an app were to help me in real time with a bank of different categories of questions and escalation techniques, it could be really helpful."* Ivy similarly envisioned AI

support for *"creat[ing] summaries and synthesiz[ing] information,"* as well as a *"tone-meter"* that could detect and rephrase emotionally charged statements *"'screw you, you know you were supposed to pick up the kids ...'"* into *"BIFF ... brief, informative, friendly and firm ... [statemens, such as] 'we need to talk. I thought you were picking up our child...'"*

3.2.2 ***Facilitating Negotiation.*** After initial grievances are shared, mediators guide parties toward productive dialogue and problem-solving. As Mike describes, mediation involves finding an *"ebb and flow"* and intervening when needed to ask, *"How do we get movement towards some kind of resolution?"*

One tool mediators use to sustain dialogue is caucusing [13/21], in which they *"speak with each side separately"* to ask challenging or reality-testing questions that are difficult to raise jointly [Juan]. As Mae notes, caucuses allow parties to speak without *"saving face"* or *"making some sort of admission ... in front of someone they don't trust."* These private exchanges support reality testing — e.g. Juan would ask questions like *"Could you actually pay this?"* — and help avoid unrealistic agreements [61].

Mediators also use *open-ended questioning* [17/21] and *looping* [5/21] — reflecting and summarizing parties' statements — to surface underlying interests[61]. As Ella explains using the orange story, a textbook mediation parable, probing why parties want the same resource (e.g. the orange) can reveal different underlying needs (e.g., pulp vs. rind), enabling mutually satisfying solutions rather than simple compromise (e.g. split the orange in two).

When conversations stall, mediators adopt additional techniques [6/21], such as structured turn-taking tools (e.g. a talking stick [Omar]) inspired by nonviolent communication[75], or visual aids that map issues and interests to support negotiation [6/21]. As Kai explains, mediators often *"write down the issues ... and the different interests"* to make points of contention visible. When challenges persist, mediators consult their community of practice for guidance [5/21].

While mediators generally avoid prescribing solutions, some, such as business [6/21] and small-claims mediators [4/21] are more directive due to court affiliations. Divorce [7/21] and workplace mediators [9/21] maintain a facilitative role. Lacking decision-making authority, many focus on communication rather than agreement as a success metric: *"whether the parties can have a civil conversation… laugh together, cry together"* [Ana]. *"Success is that the two people at the end ... can go back and have either a pleasant or neutral relationship"* [Mae]. As Omar emphasizes, *"The mediator's job is not to decide,"* leaving solution-making largely to the parties.

Surfaced Needs. Mediators expressed interest in non-disruptive AI co-mediation that could support sessions without taking over [16/21]. Kai envisions LLMs generating *"a list of issues, and what interests are implicated in each issue,"* while Ivy wants real-time suggestions when parties reach an impasse. Others emphasized the value of in-situ visualizations, particularly in complex cases such as asset division, to surface evolving positions and points of contention [6/21]. As Grace notes, *"visualizing information ... arguments, [and] the parties' positions"* could clarify disputes. Ella describes AI-generated decision-tree visualizations that communicate likely outcomes and risks: *"they only have a 20 percent chance of winning at this particular stage."* These perspectives motivate the design of our Visualization Agent (§4.2).

3.2.3 ***Converging.*** As mediation winds down, parties often reach a moment of convergence, shifting from opposition to shared understanding and problem-solving. As Omar describes, *"The problem solving is almost done ... we're working together."* Convergence does not necessarily mean formal closure. As Mike explains, it may involve discussing *"how do we want to move forward together,"* a relational shift — *"Hey, you want to walk back to the office together?"* — or a decision to return for another session. Reflecting mediation theory [61], Sophie, a divorce mediator, resists pushing agreement, arguing that doing so *"is overstepping ... Who am I to be telling them how they should resolve their situation?"*

Still, some mediators intervene when convergence risks producing unfair outcomes. Stephen recalled a case where *"the husband wanted the wife on the street,"* prompting him to step in and *"convince the husband"* until

they reached *"a fair agreement."* At this step, business [6/21] and small-claims mediators [4/21]] are often more directive, using reframing [Lia, Noah], reality-checking [11/21], or offering recommendations [6/21] to push toward resolution.

Surfaced Needs. Mediators expressed interest in LLMs as co-mediators that could ground convergence through reality testing [16/21]. Sophie believes AI could serve as a *"second voice"* in ways mediators cannot: *"people sometimes overestimate their situation and think they would do better in another process. As a mediator, I can't tell them otherwise ... but AI can give reality-testing probability. AI can do that. I can't do that."* She even envisions a future where mediators supervise AI-led sessions: *"we won't even have to be in the trenches anymore ... I would be looking over transcripts… and be summoned only if there's an issue."*

Others stressed that authority must remain with the parties. As Owen noted, AI may suggest options, but *"at the end of the day, only [the parties] can make the decision, unlike in court or arbitration,"* which he saw as central to mediation's strength. Not all mediators welcomed AI recommendations: Lina described a case where AI suggested a settlement number, which *"became a bit of a problem"* by anchoring the negotiation and stalling progress.

These tensions informed the design of our Visualization Agent (§4.2).

3.3 Dispute Closure

3.3.1 ***Keeping Record & Drafting Agreements.*** Mediators, particularly in small-claims and business contexts, often draft written agreements that can be sent to court to become legally binding [11/21]. Drawing on her legal background, Ana often drafts *"a legal document ... that can serve as the foundation for a divorce in court."* Not all outcomes are formalized, however; some agreements simply document what occurred. As Mike notes, *"we have a template ... even if it says ... we talked ... everything's resolved,"* with copies shared with the parties. Mediators emphasized that mediation outcomes are not binding unless formally reviewed, signed, or court-approved. As Ivy recalled, one of her cases reopened a year later when *"one of the spouses wasn't able to review it with an attorney yet, and so wasn't willing to sign."*

Surfaced Needs. Mediators expressed interest in AI support for automating agreement drafting [8/21]. As Ivy explains, drafting agreements can take *"as long as seven hours,"* especially in complex cases like co-owning a house and deciding years later whether to sell or buy out. *"You're writing these kinds of flowcharts,"* adding that the logical, programming-like nature of this work makes it well suited for AI assistance.

4 Design Exercise

In the previous section, we described the mediation workflow, key challenges, and participants' initial ideas for AI support. We now build on these insights by speculatively designing AI agents around three case studies to examine how mediator struggles and unmet needs might be addressed.

Method: To select the cases, we collectively reviewed all interviews and coded the mediation cases that interviewees described as particularly challenging. We then used a diagramming exercise to map the stakeholders, relationships, conflicts, and issues involved in each case. From this pool, we selected cases that (1) varied in problem type or workflow stage, (2) were described in enough detail to support design speculation, (3) recurred across multiple interviews, and (4) captured especially challenging or instructive moments for mediators[2].

The first two authors independently diagrammed each case, then discussed their analyses with the full author team in a series of weekly meetings, through which we converged on a shared understanding of the mediators' needs and the tensions at play. Following methods used in prior HCI work [22], we then sketched agent designs to address those needs (§4). To keep these designs both grounded and forward-looking, we drew on speculative AI

[2]Sample diagramming artifacts appear in Appendix C; additional details are provided in Section A.2.

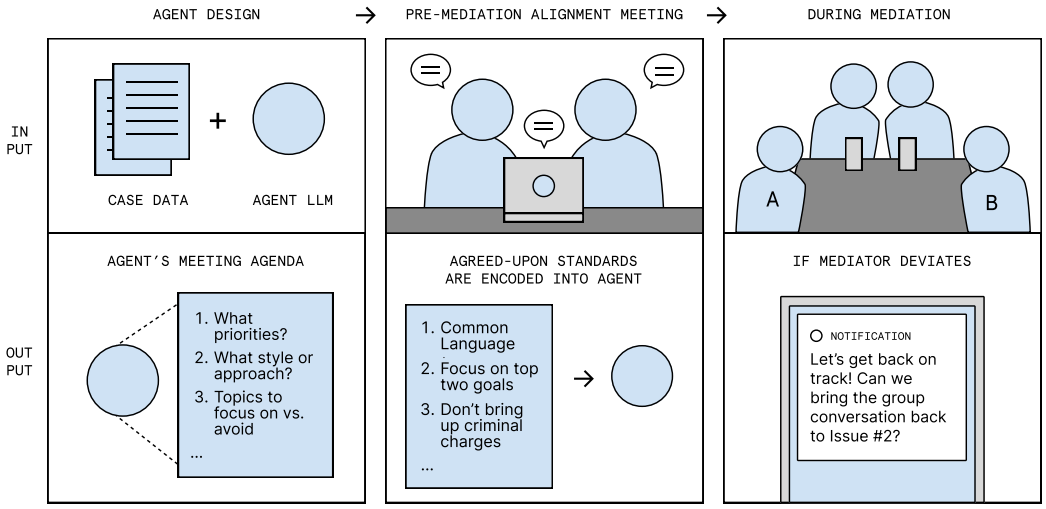

Fig. 2. A Planning Agent helps mediators determine their strategy in a pre-mediation planning session, then monitors the live mediation. If a mediator strays from the initial strategy, it privately alerts them to stay on track.

design [27, 96] and design fiction [11, 24, 72, 89]. Together, these approaches allowed us to imagine future agents rooted in real practitioner challenges while extending beyond the capabilities of current systems—an important property given that participants themselves speculated about capabilities that do not yet fully exist. Each case study concludes with a critique of how the proposed design introduces additional human–agent alignment challenges and points to directions for future research. Following work like Wyche's, we treat these agent designs not as prescriptions for systems to build, but as speculative artifacts intended to raise critical questions about what AI co-mediation could look like.

4.1 Co-mediator Conflict

Case Description. Caleb, a school dispute mediator, was called in to defuse ongoing tensions between two student groups, one Central American, the other Armenian, who were, as he put it, *"frequently involved in violent encounters."* The school's administration asked Caleb to establish an informal peer-mediation panel to address conflicts before they escalated further. To support this effort, Caleb brought in Jose, a junior co-mediator whom he had mentored because of his shared cultural and linguistic background with one of the parties: the Central American students. Caleb believed Jose's background to be particularly beneficial for rapport-building. Over time, this advantage impacted perceived neutrality: *"They were speaking a little bit of Spanish slang with him on the side,"* Caleb recalled, *"and he got caught up a little bit in the emotion of it and began doing something you are not supposed to do in a mediation: He was judging them by saying you shouldn't say that or why did you guys do that? You know that is wrong."* Caleb reported that Jose's actions undermined his efforts: *"It polluted the open space that we wanted to promote,"* the Armenian students withdrew, and the mediation stalled.

Despite trusting Jose's intentions and shared background with one group, Caleb saw the shift as a decision made on the fly, one that went against the mediation principle of regulating one's emotions and maintaining neutrality. To recover the space, he stepped in *"innocuously cutting [Jose] off a little bit and then redirecting the whole room conversation away from that."*

The Planning Agent Design. The agent (Fig. 2) helps mediators prepare an agenda and determine their strategy in a pre-mediation planning session. It accesses a repository of past cases and all the gathered information to help mediators:

(1) Review case materials and similar past cases,
(2) Agree on key strategies such as tone, language and the main issues to focus on, and
(3) Clarify each party's goals and sensitivities

The agent monitors ensuing mediations and if a mediator strays from the plan or strategy, it privately alerts them to stay on track. This design is motivated by the following surfaced needs:

In §3.1.3, we find mediators requesting support with agenda setting and pre-mediation planning. By compiling and summarizing all case materials, this agent reduces the administrative burden of preparing for mediation. When a case requires specialized knowledge, such as expert input in complex financial disagreements, the agent can gather and break down that information, saving mediators the invisible work of sourcing and interpreting it. By connecting the case to similar past ones, especially when the mediator's experience offers no clear playbook, the agent brings in strategies and insights from the broader community of practice. This reduces the need for the mediator to improvise when there are gaps in their framework.

We also find in §3.2.1 mediators requesting features for live monitoring and emotional regulation through subtle agent notifications (i.e. non-disruptive co-mediation). An agreed-upon strategy, co-developed with the agent, reduces the need for decision-making on the fly. This is complemented by the agent's live monitoring and notification system, which can prompt mediators when emotional regulation or course correction is needed, possibly minimizing the invisible work of actively self-monitoring. In this case, it might also highlight how others emphasized neutrality in ethnic conflict situations, based on past behavior across other cases, which could help guide Jose.

Human-Agent Alignment Challenge: Prioritization. This agent aims to enforce a shared vision, but its rigid adherence to the pre-mediation plan actively conflicts with the fluid nature of the session. In our case study, the agent flags Jose's use of Spanish slang as a deviation from the agreed-upon neutrality rules. However, this deviation was a necessary improvisation to build rapport—a critical step the agent misinterprets as a failure. This is the conflict between a rule-aligned agent vs. an outcome-aligned agent.

This operational misalignment transforms the agent from a support tool into a source of friction. By issuing notifications to "get back on track" during delicate moments, the agent could interrupt the mediators' flow, forcing them to expend cognitive effort ignoring or managing the tool rather than the parties. As we further note in the discussion about "Prioritization Challenge for Agents" in (§5), the agent could act as an additional, inflexible stakeholder in the room, requiring the mediators to constantly "work around" it to implement their evolving strategies.

4.2 Mediation Advocacy and Conflict of Interest

Case Description. Noah, a senior business mediator, describes cases derailed by mediation advocates, lawyers, who remained entrenched in a litigation mindset. In one such case, he described a lawyer who was there to posture rather than build agreement. *"If you get the impression that the lawyer is still in litigation or arbitration mode,"* he explained, *"then you've got to understand that the dynamics change."* Rather than confronting the lawyer, Noah shifted focus from party proxies to the actual decision-makers — the CEO and CFO. Advocates *"can act as a significant detriment,"* so instead *"you may look at who else will be in the room for that party... If the CEO and the CFO is there, you focus on them to see who is more reasonable and really try to keep [the advocates] in the background."* This re-centering on decision-makers was critical to keeping the mediation on track.

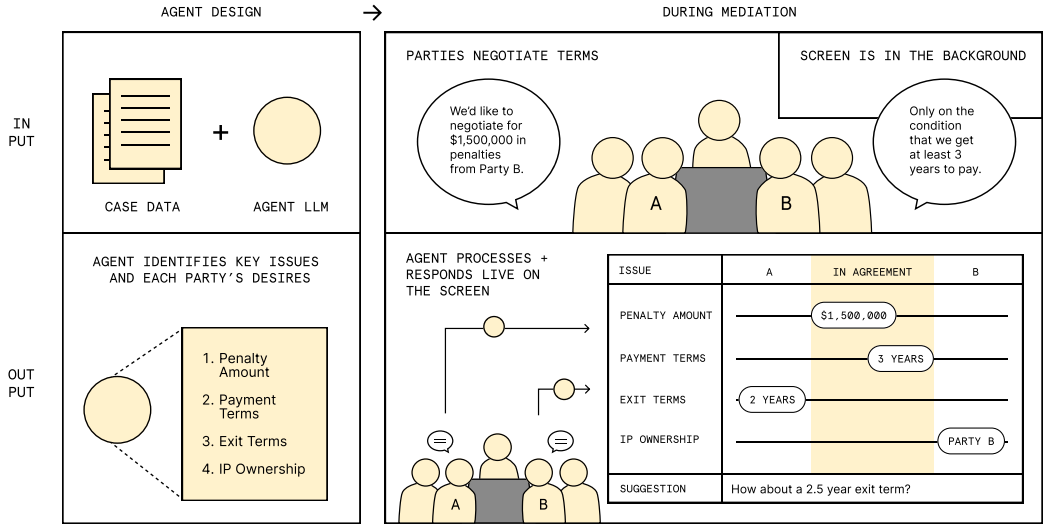

Fig. 3. A Visualization Agent visualizes and models possible solutions, bargaining zones, and trade-off scenarios voiced only by the key stakeholders in the room, preventing obstruction by other parties.

Several interviewees [Grace, Owen, Lina, Noah] reported similar experiences with obstructive mediation advocates. While advocacy is common in multi-party business mediation [45, 62, 76, 88], advocates can disrupt the process when they lack incentives to reach resolution or pursue competing objectives, such as prolonging conflict; advocates are compensated per minute!

The Visualization Agent Design. The agent (Fig. 3) tracks all case data and live mediation sessions to map out the key issues in dispute. These issues might range from financial or contractual disagreements in business mediations, to asset divisions in divorce cases, to workplace concerns such as after-hours communication and even personal feelings, such as not feeling appreciated or respected. Beyond mapping the main disputes, the agent's key function is to illustrate a *zone of possible agreement (ZOPA)*. This includes points where parties have already converged, helping avoid reopening settled issues. And, for each dispute, it suggests a point that is most likely to fall within the ZOPA, addresses the parties' concerns, and moves them closer to agreement.

The design of this agent is influenced by Noah who explains *"the whole essence of mediation is to get the parties at the zone of possible agreement. One party's over here, and the other party's over there, they're literally off the wazoo! You've got to work out how to get them into convergence."* He adds that the ZOPA is *"a magnet pulling them towards the center. It becomes a voice of reason"* and elaborates how an LLM or AI model can define for each party, *"the point in the zone of possible agreement which is closest to [the party]."* The agent reduces the influence of adversarial advocates by visually highlighting their positions as outliers. Inspired by visualization work that supports fairness in group collaboration [58], it promotes cooperation by continuously displaying progress toward the zone of agreement. Its suggestions expand the space of possible resolutions without exerting pressure, as parties and mediators may choose to ignore them, using the visualization solely as a negotiation aid. Mediators requested AI assistance to generate real-time visualizations to support understanding of complex mediation cases. Some mediators like Ella describe decision-tree visualizations that can help a party determine its chances of success if it forgoes mediation, for example, and goes to court (§3.2.2).

Steering toward success without agency may be aided by transparently presenting data on the positions held by all parties involved. Noah can't remove adversarial advocates from the room, nor openly question their

motives without undermining the trust he has built. When such advocates seek to derail rather than resolve the dispute, the mediator's lack of enforcement power becomes especially constraining. The visualization agent serves as an additional neutral third party that shows through simple visuals the most extraordinary (potentially adversarial) stances without directly calling them out. Visualizing this data allows the mediator to encourage more constructive communication while still preserving thier role as a non-enforcing facilitator.

Human-Agent Alignment Challenge: Pluralism. This agent aims to support the group by neutralizing bias through data transparency. However, in practice, its inability to discern intent can validate obstructionism. In our case study, when the adversarial lawyer postures with an extreme demand , the agent faithfully maps this data point, visually expanding the distance between the parties and shrinking the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA). Instead of exposing the obstruction, the visualization legitimizes it, presenting the lawyer's bad-faith tactic as a valid constraint equal to the principals' needs. The mediator is then left with a difficult choice: allow the visualization to anchor the negotiation in failure, or manually intervene to exclude the lawyer's input. The latter action, however, requires the mediator to visibly "take sides" against a participant, effectively forcing them to break the very neutrality the agent was designed to preserve. We discuss further as a Pluralistic challenge in "Who to align with ?" (§5).

4.3 Pursuit of Faster Outcomes over Prescribed Process

Case Description. Ana, a divorce mediator,may take on a case even when there are signs of domestic violence or harassment, instead of pursuing legal recourse, if the affected party makes a clear decision to proceed. For Ana, the question is not whether mediation is theoretically appropriate but whether it serves the individual's goals and can be done safely. She describes clients who knowingly give up potential legal advantages to exit a harmful relationship more quickly and with less emotional cost. She describes that a client, a target of domestic violence, may say to her *"I don't care if I'm giving up some things that I would otherwise be able to get in court... I want to get out of this marriage. And it is worth it to me to forego certain so-called rights if I can avoid what will be a long, drawn-out, inflammatory process that will keep me married to this person much longer. It's worth it to me to get the hell out of here."* In these cases, Ana sets aside rigid adherence to mediation models in favor of what she sees as ethical responsiveness. Her goal is to help people make empowered, strategic exits, even if that means stepping outside standard procedural expectations.

Leo, Ethan, and Sophie also deviate from standard mediation protocols and accept domestic violence or sexual harassment cases if they believe mediation may empower the victims and lead to better outcomes.

The Screening Agent Design. The agent evaluates whether a case is suitable for mediation by conducting private pre-mediation interviews and analyzing both structured inputs, such as intake forms, case history, and legal records, and unstructured signals when available, including vocal tone, facial expressions, and hesitation. Using this data, it produces a risk assessment that highlights concerns related to safety or power imbalances, particularly focusing on the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV). It continues to assess the risk during mediation sessions. If any risk indicators exceed a set threshold, the agent immediately alerts the mediators to stop the process to prevent further harm.

In §3.1.2, mediators expressed interest in AI for assessing case-mediation fit. They envisioned agents meeting with parties before mediation, analyzing profiles and conflict styles, and synthesizing verbal and non-verbal cues into risk assessments. Drawing on past cases involving intimate partner violence, the agent's screening could relieve mediators from making subjective judgment calls, like those described by Ana, shifting the decision from personal discretion to algorithmic evaluation. Such an agent alleviates the mediator's need for processing extensive case-specific knowledge and the often invisible emotional labor involved in identifying red flags during client intake. In situations where mediators cannot turn away cases assigned by their employers even when they

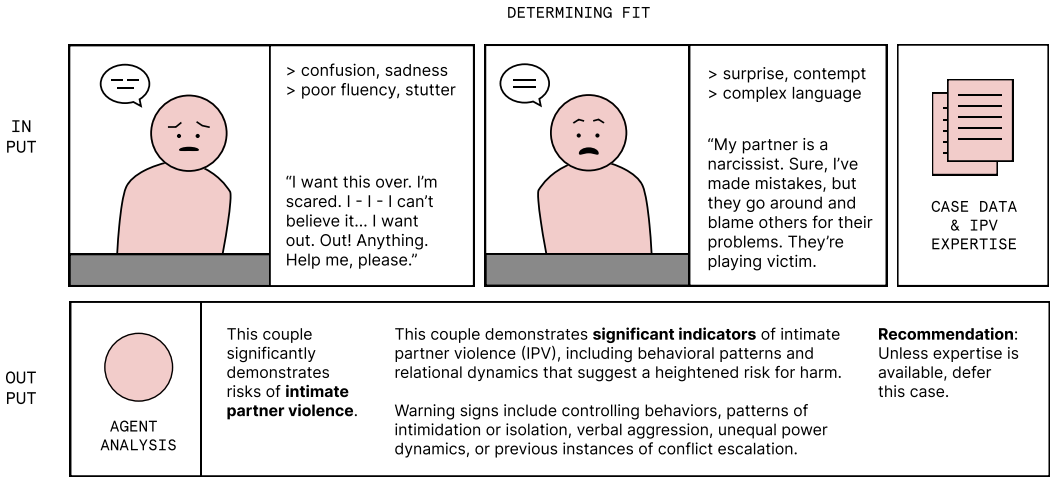

Fig. 4. A Screening Agent screens and evaluates cases' fit for mediation, which is particularly crucial when cases may involve intimate partner violence (IPV).

believe them unfit, the agent offers an independent assessment that can validate the mediators' intuition and empower them to decline or refer the case to someone with more experience.

Our speculative design assumes AI/ML performance that exceeds current IPV screening tools, which show sensitivity rates as low as 30% [73]. We also assume adherence to Fair-ML principles [77] to mitigate risks of disadvantaging protected groups, as documented in automated screening systems for hiring [34] or credit scoring [79, 110]. A potential side-effect of the agent's design is that it may inadvertently shift emotional labor onto the parties, increasing their internal stress, and undermining trust and transparency in an already fragile mediation context.

Human-Agent Alignment Challenges: Operational Roles. This agent is designed to prioritize safety by identifying risk, but in practice, its risk aversion can actively endanger the very parties it aims to protect. In our case study, the agent correctly identifies high IPV markers and, following its safety protocol, signals to terminate the mediation. However, this strictly compliant response blocks the victim's only viable exit strategy—a quick, mediated settlement that avoids a drawn-out court battle. The agent thus inadvertently fails at its role as a 'guardian' [14] of the victim in its attempt to align with its assigned task.

Furthermore, the agent's reliance on observable cues leads to dangerous misjudgments in real-time. A sophisticated abuser may present as calm and rational, while a traumatized victim may appear incoherent or hostile. By flagging the victim's behavior as "unstable" or the abuser's as "cooperative," the agent inadvertently aligns with the aggressor. This forces the mediator to not only manage the delicate human dynamics but also expend invisible labor overriding the system's safety alerts to protect the victim. Perhaps we should align AI agents with a human-forward rather than a tech-forward value system, as we discuss the "Appropriate role of agents" (§5).

5 Discussion

Our design process intended to address mediators' immediate needs and underlying struggles. Yet the very challenges we sought to ease reappeared in new forms: The need to align with agents adds to the burden of mediators' invisible work; the private notifications or conflict visualizations can act as constraining frameworks that the mediators have to improvise around; and the seemingly objective voice of the agent may further erode

the limited agency mediators have. This section goes beyond design specifics and examines the broader difficulties of integrating AI into mediation and human-centered work at large through three fundamental questions: what is the role (and status) of AI in human-centered mediation work? which values and priorities should agents align with? and how should alignment evolve in the absence of a strict and universal value hierarchy?

Appropriate Role of Agents in Mediation Workflows. Mediation poses a unique challenge for AI integration because it is fundamentally human-centered. Domains with clearly defined goals and a contained universe of actions, such as chess or classification tasks, are more amenable to AI integration. Mediation is not one of those domains. Lina makes this contrast by distinguishing adjudication, where the task is to decide between claims, from mediation, where the task is to build trust, manage emotion, and support mutual understanding: *"I don't believe a machine can replace the process. There is a significant human element: emotion, understanding, and trust-building.I think it is so much easier to have AI issue a judgment, deciding who is right and wrong based on a vast amount of evidence [the AI] can sift through ... I don't think AI could replace mediators. But I think AI can replace judges."*

Our proposed agent designs therefore attempt to *scaffold* a mediator's workflow, rather than replace mediators. The planning agent (Figure 2) helps Jose align with Caleb's prefered value of strict impartiality, while the visualization agent (Figure 3) relieves mediators like Noah of the burden of persuading parties by offloading some of that work to a real-time, dynamically updating visualization. However, these benefits are not neutral. Agentic scaffolds are not passive tools: they perceive, recommend, flag, or intervene, and they exercise a degree of autonomy within the mediation process. In doing so, they inevitably redistribute judgment, authority, and persuasion within an otherwise human-driven process.

This shift elevates the agent from a tool, an instrument mediators use to support specific tasks, to a quasi-collaborator embedded in the interactional dynamics of the session. This new status introduces an information asymmetry [49] between the mediator and the agent: the agent may act on latent model inferences, training assumptions, or hidden prioritizations that the mediator cannot fully inspect or anticipate.

It also raises a role ambiguity problem. Recent agentic AI frameworks propose taxonomies that distinguish agent types [52, 65]. For example, Kruhse-Lehtonen and Hofmann distinguishes roles such as assistant, analyst, tasker, orchestrator, and guardian. Although these roles are more clearly mapped onto enterprise workflows with relatively clear end goals, such as marketing [3, 52], they are harder to apply to mediation. It remains unclear, for example, whether our planning agent should behave like an 'orchestrator' by instantiating a mediation plan to follow, or like a 'guardian' by flagging a mediator's deviations from that plan.

This role ambiguity is not just a technical design problem; it is also a mediation-theory problem. Mediators may act differently depending on their theoretical orientation. For example, a *facilitative* mediator may place greater emphasis on party protection and fairness, while a *transformative* mediator may prioritize self-determination and empowerment [14]. An AI agent designed to support either approach will inevitably reflect that mediator's value system, shaping its behavior accordingly while giving less weight to the values of other models and practitioners. Prior work on conflict-coaching agents [13] and agent-based negotiation modeling [26, 57] raises a similar concern: whose interests does an agent represent, especially when its role shifts over the course of a session?

The role-and-interpretation problem becomes especially acute when parties strategically perform cooperation or conceal harmful dynamics. As the case studies show, agents face the same interpretive challenges as mediators: differentiating between good-faith and bad-faith actors in emotionally charged sessions where actions may be covert and intent is difficult to read. An agent must, for example, discern that Jose's rapport-building was misguided but not malicious, and that the lawyers in Noah's case were adversarial without generalizing this behavior to all mediation advocates.

An agent must also navigate "oppression story" situations where the informality and consensuality of mediation is leveraged by a stronger party to manipulate a weaker one [16]. Ivy's case illustrates the stakes of this challenge.

She describes an experience in which she was initially misled: *"I once had a 30-minute session. It seemed to go quite well, and then I got a message from the husband that said, 'No, my wife is verbally abusive. We can't do this together.' I wouldn't have noticed that unless he shared it with me."* A pre-existing power imbalance favoring the stronger party had underpinned the mediation all along. This pivotal disclosure depended on trust in a *transformative* mediator's ability to receive emotionally complex information, manage power imbalance, and avoid escalating harm [16]. That kind of trust may not extend to an AI agent, especially one whose role, data access, and intervention logic remain unclear. Even if future agents become more capable and less brittle, greater autonomy does not automatically grant them the discernment, empathy, or moral accountability expected of human mediators.

Prioritization Challenge for Agents in Mediation Workflows. Even when all human participants engage in good faith, agents face fundamental difficulties in prioritizing conflicting values. In the first case study, both co-mediators value the children's future success. However, Caleb emphasizes impartiality while Jose prioritizes informal rapport-building. Which approach is correct? If an agent encodes both value systems within its constitution [71], it must still choose which to enact in practice, and privileging either produces behavioral misalignment [101]. It is unclear whether requiring a mediator to make such alignment micro-decisions would simplify or complicate their workflow. Further research is needed to understand the impact of this additional layer on *invisible work* in the mediator process. Beyond detecting or managing conflicts among users [**?**], agents must develop a meta-skill to prioritize values based on context dynamically.

Our design exercise assumes agents are built in service of successful mediation, but it overlooks incentive structures shaping real-world deployment. Thus, real agent designs may reflect the incentives of builders and buyers, rather than the needs of multiple values and parties in a dispute. For example, agents evaluated through mediator satisfaction scores may align with mediators' decisions, while agents priced per agreement may optimize for rapid case closure by favoring those best positioned to decide quickly. Lastly, the feedback and preferences of high-paying power-user mediators may be overrepresented in agents' subsequent training data. In each case, agents risk implicit alignment with funders or frequent users rather than with the diverse needs of all parties in the mediation room.

Who to align with? Research on AI alignment envisions systems that can align with multiple human values [81]. Bidirectional [83] and pluralistic alignment [87] extend this goal beyond reward-function specification during training. However, our case studies show that mediation poses a harder problem than simply aggregating or balancing multiple preferences. Mediation is an evolving process in which parties' positions, relationships, and understandings may change over time. As Leo explains, parties *"...are initially fixed in their positions but if the mediation is working well, you begin to see a change."* Because parties' goals are malleable, an agent that treats early stated preferences as stable objectives may preserve or optimize for positions that the mediation process is meant to transform, especially since mediation can be more of a transformative rather than a conflict-settlment process [14]. This would reward positions that are more legible, convenient, or confident, especially when one party is more well-equipped to frame outcomes that favor them as mutually desirable. [14]

This creates a particular risk in multiparty conflict resolution: an agent may appear to support a pluralistic group goal while actually privileging the narrative of one party. For example, in the visualization agent (Figure 3), an agent could foreground a lawyer-preferred quick cash settlement and present it as the most successful outcome for the group, even if this primarily reflects the priorities of the most powerful actors. This risk echoes broader concerns about post-training alignment methods such as RLHF, which can be vulnerable to *alignment-faking*, where models appear aligned to receive rewards while retaining prior biases [40]. In mediation, such risks are especially consequential because AI systems can reinforce bias or exhibit sycophantic behavior toward one group member, potentially distorting social dynamics in contexts where existing power imbalances already favor one party further impeding mediation's intended goals of justice, repair, and mutual benefit [16, 47].

The question, then, is not only whose values an agent should align with, but also what role the agent is authorized to play in the mediation process. Pluralistic alignment research must grapple with how agent roles shape human-focused processes such as mediation [52, 65]. Even seemingly minor design choices can shift negotiation dynamics. For example, recent work shows that assigning an AI agent a personality profile consistent with Big Five traits can measurably affect simulated bargaining and job negotiation outcomes [23]. In simulated job negotiations, human digital-twin candidates configured with high agreeableness and extraversion showed higher transactivity with their AI recruiter: they more often responded to, elaborated on, and built from the recruiter's reasoning rather than merely exchanging offers.

Addressing these challenges requires alignment methods that move beyond binary human feedback [17] and can represent evolving interpersonal relationships, role-specific obligations, and shifting stakeholder values. Methods that model complex dynamics through structures such as annotated graphs [12] may offer one promising direction, but mediation also exposes a deeper affordance problem: agents can only align with the values, relationships, and signals they are able to perceive and represent. Work in Physical AI offers a useful analogy [59, 85]. Robots and autonomous vehicles must align safety across stakeholders in dynamic environments, but they remain bounded by their sensing and actuation affordances. As Sitti observes, a single agent can only perform well within the task space enabled by its physical affordances, such as sensing, walking, or driving. Mediation agents face a similar ceiling [85]. A visualization agent that has been granted the affordance of mapping stated positions can help structure explicit claims. However, it cannot reliably process invisible or interactional signals such as tone, hesitation, coercion, bad faith, or body language.

Without addressing these fundamental research questions, the proposed co-mediation AI agents may be unworkable. This does not mean that AI agents have no role in supporting mediators. Prior work in creative writing shows that narrowly-scoped edits avoid the alignment failures associated with higher-level decisions such as choosing an overall style [21]. Perhaps our design misstep was in asking agents to screen for risk, rather than using them to support mediators in doing so. For example, it may be suited to answer questions like: "*Show me any evidence of coercion or lack thereof between the parties in this session.*" Similarly, instead of allowing a visualization agent to downplay adversarial voices, a better design might focus on responding to specific "what-if" questions, such as, "*What if party A doesn't accept these terms?*" There may also be value in deploying agents *outside* of live mediation. For instance, to simulate party behavior in advance, thereby helping mediators prepare and build expertise and address their underlying struggle to improvise due to gaps in their training frameworks.

6 Limitations & Conclusion

Our work has several limitations. Although the same three core challenges emerged across all 21 professional mediators we interviewed (16 in the United States and 5 in the United Arab Emirates), future work should include mediators from a broader range of locations, cultures, and levels of AI fluency, as well as additional stakeholders such as legal authorities to account for differences in laws and regulations. Consistent with HCI's long tradition of using speculative design fiction to explore complex sociotechnical interventions before implementation [48, 105], our agent designs are intentionally speculative and have not been empirically tested. We, therefore, invite future work to validate and extend these findings through real prototypes deployed with mediators.

Despite these limitations, our speculative designs suggest that, even with AI agents, mediators may still need to manage invisible labor, steer without agency, and improvise around gaps in theoretical frameworks, albeit in new ways. Ultimately, intractable human-agent alignment challenges can undermine the entire endeavor of creating effective co-mediator agents.

7 Generative AI Usage Statement

We did not use generative AI to produce this manuscript. A large language model was occasionally used for assistance with formatting, and summarizing drafts, and all its outputs were critically reviewed, substantially edited, or removed by the authors.

8 Acknowledgements

This work was supported by NYUAD CITIES, funded by Tamkeen under the Research Institute Award CG001.

References

[1] Sahar Abdelnabi, Amr Gomaa, Sarath Sivaprasad, Lea Schönherr, and Mario Fritz. 2023. LLM-Deliberation: Evaluating LLMs with Interactive Multi-Agent Negotiation Games. arXiv:2309.17234 [cs.CL]

[2] Abu Dhabi Global Market. 2025. Mediation in the Metaverse. https://www.adgm.com/initiatives/mediation-in-the-metaverse.

[3] Adobe Inc. 2025. Adobe Launches Adobe Experience Platform Agent Orchestrator for Businesses to Activate AI Agents in Customer Experiences and Marketing Workflows. Press release. https://news.adobe.com/news/2025/03/adobe-launches-adobe-experience-platform-agent-orchestrator-for-businesses Announced at Adobe Summit, Las Vegas, March 18, 2025.

[4] Saleema Amershi, Dan Weld, Mihaela Vorvoreanu, Adam Fourney, Besmira Nushi, Penny Collisson, Jina Suh, Shamsi Iqbal, Paul N. Bennett, Kori Inkpen, Jaime Teevan, Ruth Kikin-Gil, and Eric Horvitz. 2019. Guidelines for Human-AI Interaction. In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Glasgow, Scotland Uk) *(CHI '19)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300233

[5] Joshua Ashkinaze, Emily Fry, Narendra Edara, Eric Gilbert, and Ceren Budak. 2025. Plurals: A System for Guiding LLMs via Simulated Social Ensembles. In *Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 245, 21 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3713675

[6] American Arbitration Association. 2024. American Arbitration Association - ADR.org. https://www.adr.org/

[7] Junior Francisco Garcia Ayala, Miro Mannino, and Azza Abouzied. 2024. "I'll Pay Half the Cost, for the Loft" — From Searching to Agreeing on Group Property Rentals. In *Companion of the 2024 Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW Companion '24)* (San Jose, Costa Rica). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 7 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3678884.3681908

[8] Jennifer E. Beer and Caroline C. Packard. 2012. *The Mediator's Handbook: Revised & Expanded Fourth Edition.* New Society Publishers. https://www.amazon.com/Mediators-Handbook-Revised-Expanded-fourth/dp/0865717222 Accessed: 2024-08-22.

[9] Federico Bianchi, Patrick John Chia, Mert Yuksekgonul, Jacopo Tagliabue, Dan Jurafsky, and James Zou. 2024. How Well Can LLMs Negotiate? NegotiationArena Platform and Analysis. arXiv:2402.05863 [cs.AI]

[10] Julian Bleecker. 2009. Design Fiction: A Short Essay on Design, Science, Fact and Fiction. http://nearfuturelaboratory.com/2009/03/17/design-fiction-a-short-essay-on-design-science-fact-and-fiction/. Accessed: 2025-04-14.

[11] Mark Blythe. 2014. Research Through Design Fiction: Narrative in Real and Imaginary Abstracts. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 703–712. https://doi.org/10.1145/2556288.2557098

[12] Angie Boggust, Hyemin Bang, Hendrik Strobelt, and Arvind Satyanarayan. 2025. Abstraction Alignment: Comparing Model-Learned and Human-Encoded Conceptual Relationships. In *Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '25)*. ACM, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3713406

[13] Morgan Brigg, Daniel Druckman, Serge Loode, and Hannibal A. Thai. 2025. The conflict coaching challenge: design and evaluation of an online conflict coach. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 36, 2 (2025), 320–347. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-07-2024-0159

[14] Robert A. Baruch Bush. 2019. A Pluralistic Approach to Mediation Ethics: Delivering on Mediation's Different Promises. *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution* 34, 3 (2019), 459–512. https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/faculty_scholarship/1268

[15] Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger. 2004. *The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict.* Jossey-Bass. https://www.amazon.com/Promise-Mediation-Transformative-Approach-Conflict/dp/0787974838 Accessed: 2024-08-22.

[16] Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger. 2010. Transformative Mediation: Theoretical Foundations. In *Transformative Mediation: A Sourcebook*, Joseph P. Folger, Robert A. Baruch Bush, and Dorothy J. Della Noce (Eds.). Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, New York, NY, Chapter 1.

[17] Maarten Buyl, Hadi Khalaf, Claudio Mayrink Verdun, Lucas Monteiro Paes, Caio Cesar Vieira Machado, and Flavio du Pin Calmon. 2025. AI Alignment at Your Discretion. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 3046–3074. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732194

[18] Alyson Carrel and Noam Ebner. 2019. Mind the Gap: Bringing Technology to the Mediation Table. *Negotiation Processes & Communications eJournal* (2019). https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:199164024

[19] Jamie Cartwright. 2023. *Mediation as a Pillar of Dispute Resolution: It's Happening, Embrace It.* https://www.charlesrussellspeechlys.com/en/insights/quick-reads/102io95-mediation-as-a-pillar-of-dispute-resolution-its-happening-embrace-it/

[20] Louis Castricato, Nathan Lile, Rafael Rafailov, Jan-Philipp Fränken, and Chelsea Finn. 2024. PERSONA: A Reproducible Testbed for Pluralistic Alignment. arXiv:2407.17387 [cs.CL] https://arxiv.org/abs/2407.17387

[21] Tuhin Chakrabarty, Philippe Laban, and Chien-Sheng Wu. 2025. Can AI Writing Be Salvaged? Mitigating Idiosyncrasies and Improving Human-AI Alignment in the Writing Process through Edits. In *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)*. ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/nnnnnnn.nnnnnnn

[22] Kevin Chow, Joanna McGrenere, Thomas Fritz, Lucas L Puente, and Michael Massimi. 2025. Beyond the Watercooler: Designing for Computer-Mediated Self-Disclosure among Work Colleagues. In *Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 1204, 21 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3713550

[23] Kevin Cohen, Xinyi Su, et al. 2025. Exploring Big Five Personality and AI Capability Effects in LLM-Simulated Negotiation Dialogues. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2506.15928* (2025). https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.15928

[24] Paul Coulton, Joseph Lindley, Miriam Sturdee, and Mike Stead. 2020. Design Fiction as World Building. In *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS '20)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1711–1723. https://doi.org/10.1145/3357236.3395545

[25] John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth. 2016. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage Publications.

[26] Alan R. Dennis, Akshat Lakhiwal, and Agrim Sachdeva. 2023. AI Agents as Team Members: Effects on Satisfaction, Conflict, Trustworthiness, and Willingness to Work With. *Journal of Management Information Systems* 40, 2 (2023), 307–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2023.2196773

[27] Amelia Lee Doğan. 2025. Tomatoes Die: A Design Fiction for Grassroots Climate AI. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 9, GROUP (January 2025). https://doi.org/10.1145/3701212

[28] Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby. 2013. *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

[29] Tarik Dzekman. 2023. Exploring the AI Alignment Problem with Gridworlds. *Towards Data Science* (2023). https://towardsdatascience.com/exploring-the-ai-alignment-problem-with-gridworlds-2683f2f5af38 Accessed: 2024-10-13.

[30] eBay, Inc. 2024. eBay Buyer Protection - Resolution Center. https://pages.ebay.com/services/buyandsell/disputeres.html. Accessed: 2024-08-18.

[31] Shangbin Feng, Taylor Sorensen, Yuhan Liu, Jillian Fisher, Chan Young Park, Yejin Choi, and Yulia Tsvetkov. 2024. Modular Pluralism: Pluralistic Alignment via Multi-LLM Collaboration. arXiv:2406.15951 [cs.CL] https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.15951

[32] Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. 2011. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. Penguin.

[33] Association for Conflict Resolution. 2024. Association for Conflict Resolution - ACRnet.org. https://acrnet.org/

[34] Marissa Kumar Gerchick, Ro Encarnación, Cole Tanigawa-Lau, Lena Armstrong, Ana Gutiérrez, and Danaé Metaxa. 2025. Auditing the Audits: Lessons for Algorithmic Accountability from Local Law 144's Bias Audits. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 29–44. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732004

[35] Google. 2024. Google Docs. https://docs.google.com. Accessed: 2024-08-18.

[36] Mitchell L. Gordon, Michelle S. Lam, Joon Sung Park, Kayur Patel, Jeff Hancock, Tatsunori Hashimoto, and Michael S. Bernstein. 2022. Jury Learning: Integrating Dissenting Voices into Machine Learning Models. In *Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (New Orleans, LA, USA) *(CHI '22)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 115, 19 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3502004

[37] Jarod Govers, Eduardo Velloso, Vassilis Kostakos, and Jorge Goncalves. 2024. AI-Driven Mediation Strategies for Audience Depolarisation in Online Debates. In *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (, Honolulu, HI, USA,) *(CHI '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 803, 18 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642322

[38] Nitesh Goyal, Minsuk Chang, and Michael Terry. 2024. Designing for Human-Agent Alignment: Understanding what humans want from their agents. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2024 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 106, 6 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3613905.3650948

[39] Michelle Grando. 2021. *The Rise of Global Mediation: A New Treaty Portends Growth.* https://www.whitecase.com/insight-alert/rise-global-mediation-new-treaty-portends-growth Alert, 28 June 2021, 5 min read.

[40] Ryan Greenblatt, Carson Denison, Benjamin Wright, Fabien Roger, Monte MacDiarmid, Sam Marks, Johannes Treutlein, Tim Belonax, Jack Chen, David Duvenaud, Akbir Khan, Julian Michael, Sören Mindermann, Ethan Perez, Linda Petrini, Jonathan Uesato, Jared Kaplan, Buck Shlegeris, Samuel R. Bowman, and Evan Hubinger. 2024. Alignment faking in large language models. arXiv:2412.14093 [cs.AI] https://arxiv.org/abs/2412.14093

[41] Mergi Hernandez. 2023. How Mediation Works: The Process in 10 Stages. https://www.lawlibrary.ie/viewpoints/mediation-process/ Accessed: 2024-08-22.

[42] Mark Hickson. 2022. *The Future of Mediation.* https://www.brownejacobson.com/insights/the-future-of-mediation 03 November 2022, Head of Business Development.

[43] Kenneth Holstein, Maria De-Arteaga, Lakshmi Tumati, and Yanghuidi Cheng. 2023. Toward Supporting Perceptual Complementarity in Human-AI Collaboration via Reflection on Unobservables. *Proc. ACM Hum.-Comput. Interact.* 7, CSCW1, Article 152 (April 2023), 20 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3579628

[44] Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre. 2025. *What is Mediation?* https://www.hkiac.org/mediation/what-is-mediation

[45] International Mediation Institute. 2013. *Competency Criteria for Mediation Advocates and Advisors.* https://imimediation.org/orgs/competency-criteria-mediation-advocates-advisors/ Accessed: 2025-04-25.

[46] International Mediation Institute. 2024. IMI Certification Process. https://imimediation.org/practitioners/certify/. Accessed: 2024-10-14.

[47] Shomik Jain, Charlotte Park, Matt Viana, Ashia Wilson, and Dana Calacci. 2026. Interaction Context Often Increases Sycophancy in LLMs. In *Proceedings of the 2026 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '26).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 793, 26 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3772318.3791915

[48] Sukwoo Jang and Ki-Young Nam. 2022. Utilization of Speculative Design for Designing Human-AI Interactions. *Archives of Design Research* 35, 2 (2022), 57–71. https://doi.org/10.15187/adr.2022.05.35.2.57

[49] Nari Johnson, Elise Silva, Harrison Leon, Motahhare Eslami, Beth Schwanke, Ravit Dotan, and Hoda Heidari. 2025. Legacy Procurement Practices Shape How U.S. Cities Govern AI: Understanding Government Employees' Practices, Challenges, and Needs. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 772–789. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732049

[50] Hannah Rose Kirk, Alexander Whitefield, Paul Röttger, Andrew Bean, Katerina Margatina, Juan Ciro, Rafael Mosquera, Max Bartolo, Adina Williams, He He, Bertie Vidgen, and Scott A. Hale. 2024. The PRISM Alignment Project: What Participatory, Representative and Individualised Human Feedback Reveals About the Subjective and Multicultural Alignment of Large Language Models. arXiv:2404.16019 [cs.CL] https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.16019

[51] Andrew Konya, Luke Thorburn, Wasim Almasri, Oded Adomi Leshem, Ariel Procaccia, Lisa Schirch, and Michiel Bakker. 2025. Using collective dialogues and AI to find common ground between Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 312–333. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732022

[52] Ulla Kruhse-Lehtonen and Dirk Hofmann. 2026. The Agent-Centric Enterprise: Why 2–10× Productivity Gains Demand Radical Workflow Redesign. *Harvard Data Science Review* 8, 1 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.d41fe89a

[53] Nathan Lambert, Louis Castricato, Leandro von Werra, and Alex Havrilla. 2022. Illustrating Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF). *Hugging Face Blog* (2022). https://huggingface.co/blog/rlhf.

[54] Min Kyung Lee and Su Baykal. 2017. Algorithmic Mediation in Group Decisions: Fairness Perceptions of Algorithmically Mediated vs. Discussion-Based Social Division. In *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing* (Portland, Oregon, USA) *(CSCW '17).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1035–1048. https://doi.org/10.1145/2998181.2998230

[55] Min Kyung Lee and Su Baykal. 2017. Algorithmic Mediation in Group Decisions: Fairness Perceptions of Algorithmically Mediated vs. Discussion-Based Social Division. In *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing* (Portland, Oregon, USA) *(CSCW '17).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1035–1048. https://doi.org/10.1145/2998181.2998230

[56] Jan Leike, Miljan Martic, Victoria Krakovna, Pedro A. Ortega, Tom Everitt, Andrew Lefrancq, Laurent Orseau, and Shane Legg. 2017. AI Safety Gridworlds. arXiv:1711.09883 [cs.LG] https://arxiv.org/abs/1711.09883

[57] Frieder Lempp. 2020. A new agent-based simulation model of bilateral negotiation. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 31, 1 (2020), 115–148. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-07-2019-0118

[58] Jia-Wei Liang and Hao-Chuan Wang. 2025. Is It Fair Enough? Supporting Equitable Group Work Assignment with Work Division Dashboard. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2480–2490. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732163

[59] Aslan Miriyev and Mirko Kovač. 2020. Skills for physical artificial intelligence. *Nature Machine Intelligence* 2, 11 (2020), 658–660. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-020-00258-y

[60] John P. Moffitt and T. Arnold Powell. 2021. *Designing Mediation: Approaches to Training and Practice.* American Bar Association. https://www.amazon.com/Designing-Mediation-Approaches-Training-Practice/dp/1641059709 Accessed: 2024-08-22.

[61] Christopher W. Moore. 2014. *The Mediation Process.* Jossey-Bass.

[62] Moore Barlow LLP. 2017. *What is Mediation Advocacy?* https://www.moorebarlow.com/blog/what-is-mediation-advocacy/ Accessed: 2025-04-25.

[63] Meredith Ringel Morris, Michael S. Bernstein, Jeffrey P. Bigham, Amy S. Bruckman, and Andrés Monroy-Hernández. 2024. Is Human-AI Interaction CSCW?. In *Companion Publication of the 2024 Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing* (San Jose, Costa Rica) *(CSCW Companion '24).* Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 95–97. https:

//doi.org/10.1145/3678884.3689134

[64] Andrea Murad. 2022. *Mediation, Arbitration or Trial? Information to Make Your Decision With.* https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/270724

[65] Ume Nisa, Muhammad Shirazi, Mohamed Ali Saip, and Muhammad Syafiq Mohd Pozi. 2026. Agentic AI: The Age of Reasoning—A Review. *Journal of Automation and Intelligence* 5 (2026), 69–89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jai.2025.08.003

[66] Nolo. 2024. The Mediation Process and Dispute Resolution. https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/mediation-six-stages-30252.html Accessed: 2024-08-22.

[67] Brent Norling. 2023. *Overcoming Barriers and Challenges of Mediation.* https://norlinglaw.co.nz/blog-posts/overcoming-barriers-and-challenges-of-mediation/ 18 January 2023.

[68] Mediation Committee of the International Bar Association. 2025. Guidelines on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Mediation. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/28f9546d-3424-4752-9ee0-42e7335eef8b/MC%20DRAFT%20AI%20in%20Mediation%20Guidelines.pdf Draft guidelines on the role of AI in mediation, covering applications, risks, and safeguards..

[69] OpenAI. 2022. Aligning Language Models to Follow Instructions. https://openai.com/index/instruction-following/ Accessed: 2024-10-14.

[70] OpenAI. 2024. *Practices for Governing Agentic AI Systems.* Technical Report. OpenAI. https://cdn.openai.com/papers/practices-for-governing-agentic-ai-systems.pdf White Paper.

[71] Savvas Petridis, Benjamin D Wedin, James Wexler, Mahima Pushkarna, Aaron Donsbach, Nitesh Goyal, Carrie J Cai, and Michael Terry. 2024. ConstitutionMaker: Interactively Critiquing Large Language Models by Converting Feedback into Principles. In *Proceedings of the 29th International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces* (Greenville, SC, USA) *(IUI '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 853–868. https://doi.org/10.1145/3640543.3645144

[72] Melina Petsolari, Seray Ibrahim, and Petr Slovak. 2024. Socio-technical Imaginaries: Envisioning and Understanding AI Parenting Supports through Design Fiction. In *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '24)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642619

[73] Rebecca F Rabin, Jacky M Jennings, Jacquelyn C Campbell, and Megan H Bair-Merritt. 2009. Intimate partner violence screening tools: a systematic review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 36, 5 (2009), 439–445.e4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2009.01.024

[74] Juan-Pablo Rivera, Gabriel Mukobi, Anka Reuel, Max Lamparth, Chandler Smith, and Jacquelyn Schneider. 2024. Escalation Risks from Language Models in Military and Diplomatic Decision-Making. In *Proceedings of the 2024 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) *(FAccT '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 836–898. https://doi.org/10.1145/3630106.3658942

[75] Marshall B. Rosenberg. 2015. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships* (3rd ed.). PuddleDancer Press, Encinitas, CA.

[76] Matthew Rushton. 2014. *Effective Mediation Advocacy.* JAMS International. https://www.jamsadr.com/files/uploads/documents/international/effective-mediation-advocacy-ebook.pdf Accessed: 2025-04-25.

[77] Alpay Sabuncuoglu, Christopher Burr, and Carsten Maple. 2025. Justified Evidence Collection for Argument-based AI Fairness Assurance. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*. ACM, 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732003

[78] Kavous Salehzadeh Niksirat, Diana Korka, Hamza Harkous, Kévin Huguenin, and Mauro Cherubini. 2023. On the Potential of Mediation Chatbots for Mitigating Multiparty Privacy Conflicts - A Wizard-of-Oz Study. *Proc. ACM Hum.-Comput. Interact.* 7, CSCW1, Article 142 (April 2023), 33 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3579618

[79] Holli Sargeant and Måns Magnusson. 2025. Formalising Anti-Discrimination Law in Automated Decision Systems. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 181–194. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732015

[80] B. Saunders, J. Sim, T. Kingstone, S. Baker, J. Waterfield, B. Bartlam, H. Burroughs, and C. Jinks. 2018. Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity* 52, 4 (2018), 1893–1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8 Epub 2017 Sep 14.

[81] Rohin Shah and Dan Hendrycks. 2024. AI Alignment Survey. https://alignmentsurvey.com/ Accessed: 2024-10-14.

[82] Omar Shaikh, Valentino Chai, Michele J. Gelfand, Diyi Yang, and Michael S. Bernstein. 2024. Rehearsal: Simulating Conflict to Teach Conflict Resolution. arXiv:2309.12309 [cs.HC]

[83] Hua Shen, Tiffany Knearem, Reshmi Ghosh, Kenan Alkiek, Kundan Krishna, Yachuan Liu, Ziqiao Ma, Savvas Petridis, Yi-Hao Peng, Li Qiwei, Sushrita Rakshit, Chenglei Si, Yutong Xie, Jeffrey P. Bigham, Frank Bentley, Joyce Chai, Zachary Lipton, Qiaozhu Mei, Rada Mihalcea, Michael Terry, Diyi Yang, Meredith Ringel Morris, Paul Resnick, and David Jurgens. 2024. Towards Bidirectional Human-AI Alignment: A Systematic Review for Clarifications, Framework, and Future Directions. arXiv:2406.09264 [cs.HC] https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.09264

[84] Katie Shonk. 2024. AI Mediation: Using AI to Help Mediate Disputes. *PON - Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School* (June 2024). https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/mediation/ai-mediation-using-ai-to-help-mediate-disputes/

[85] Metin Sitti. 2021. Physical intelligence as a new paradigm. *Extreme Mechanics Letters* 46 (2021), 101340. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eml.2021.101340

[86] Taylor Sorensen, Liwei Jiang, Jena D. Hwang, Sydney Levine, Valentina Pyatkin, Peter West, Nouha Dziri, Ximing Lu, Kavel Rao, Chandra Bhagavatula, Maarten Sap, John Tasioulas, and Yejin Choi. 2024. Value Kaleidoscope: Engaging AI with Pluralistic Human Values, Rights, and Duties. *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence* 38, 18 (March 2024), 19937–19947. https://doi.org/10.1609/aaai.v38i18.29970

[87] Taylor Sorensen, Jared Moore, Jillian Fisher, Mitchell Gordon, Niloofar Mireshghallah, Christopher Michael Rytting, Andre Ye, Liwei Jiang, Ximing Lu, Nouha Dziri, Tim Althoff, and Yejin Choi. 2024. A Roadmap to Pluralistic Alignment. arXiv:2402.05070 [cs.AI] https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.05070

[88] Sheldon Stark. 2023. A Litigator's Guide to Mediation Advocacy. *Mediate.com* (2023). https://mediate.com/a-litigators-guide-to-mediation-advocacy/ Accessed: 2025-04-25.

[89] Bruce Sterling. 2012. *Bruce Sterling on Design Fictions.* https://slate.com/technology/2012/03/bruce-sterling-on-design-fictions.html Interview by Torie Bosch, Slate Magazine.

[90] Jinzhe Tan, Hannes Westermann, Nikhil Reddy Pottanigari, Jaromír Savelka, Sebastien Meeùs, Mia Godet, and Karim Benyekhlef. 2024. Robots in the Middle: Evaluating LLMs in Dispute Resolution. arXiv:2410.07053 [cs.HC] https://arxiv.org/abs/2410.07053

[91] Michael Terry, Chinmay Kulkarni, Martin Wattenberg, Lucas Dixon, and Meredith Ringel Morris. 2024. Interactive AI Alignment: Specification, Process, and Evaluation Alignment. arXiv:2311.00710 [cs.HC] https://arxiv.org/abs/2311.00710

[92] Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory. 2012. Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. *Sociological Theory* 30, 3 (September 2012), 167–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275112457914

[93] University Ombuds Office, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 2024. Informal Conflict Resolution Strategies. https://ombuds.unc.edu/resources/informal-conflict-resolution-strategies/ Accessed: 2024-08-27.

[94] U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. 2024. Preparing for a Mediation. https://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/mediation/preparing-for-a-mediation Accessed: 2024-10-21.

[95] U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. What is Mediation? https://www.commerce.gov/cr/reports-and-resources/eeo-mediation-guide/what-mediation Accessed: 2024-10-21.

[96] Priyan Vaithilingam, Ian Arawjo, and Elena L. Glassman. 2024. Imagining a Future of Designing with AI: Dynamic Grounding, Constructive Negotiation, and Sustainable Motivation. In *Proceedings of the 2024 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference* (IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark) *(DIS '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 289–300. https://doi.org/10.1145/3643834.3661525

[97] Luis Vila-Henninger, Camille Dupuy, Virginie Van Ingelgom, Matteo Caprioli, Friederike Teuber, David Pennetreau, Matthias Bussi, and Caroline Le Gall. 2024. Abductive Coding: Theory Building and Qualitative (Re)Analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research* 53, 2 (2024), 968–1001. https://doi.org/10.1177/00491241211067508

[98] Sabine Walsh. 2016. Who's Got the List? Different Approaches to Professional Regulation. Kluwer Mediation Blog. Kluwer Mediation Blog, September 7, 2016.

[99] Michael Waterhouse. 2023. Can ChatGPT be used to train mediators? *Waterhouse Mediation* (2023). https://waterhousemediation.com.au/uncategorized/can-chatgpt-be-used-to-train-mediators/

[100] Justin D. Weisz, Jessica He, Michael Muller, Gabriela Hoefer, Rachel Miles, and Werner Geyer. 2024. Design Principles for Generative AI Applications. In *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '24)*. ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642466

[101] Robert West and Roland Aydin. 2025. The AI Alignment Paradox. *Commun. ACM* (February 2025). https://cacm.acm.org/opinion/the-ai-alignment-paradox Opinion column.

[102] Hannes Westermann, Jaromir Savelka, and Karim Benyekhlef. 2023. LLMediator: GPT-4 Assisted Online Dispute Resolution. arXiv:2307.16732 [cs.CL]

[103] Lee Wing, John Martinez, Ethan Katsh, and Colin Rule. 2021. Designing Ethical Online Dispute Resolution Systems: The Rise of the Fourth Party. *Negotiation Journal* 37, 1 (2021), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12350

[104] Susan Wyche. 2022. Reimagining the Mobile Phone: Investigating Speculative Approaches to Design in Human-Computer Interaction for Development (HCI4D). *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 6, CSCW2, Article 535 (November 2022), 27 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3555648

[105] Susan P. Wyche. 2022. Reimagining the Mobile Phone: Investigating Speculative Approaches to Design in HCI4D. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 6, CSCW2 (2022), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1145/3555126

[106] John Yang, Carlos E. Jimenez, Alexander Wettig, Kilian Lieret, Shunyu Yao, Karthik Narasimhan, and Ofir Press. 2024. SWE-agent: Agent-Computer Interfaces Enable Automated Software Engineering. arXiv:2405.15793 [cs.SE] https://arxiv.org/abs/2405.15793

[107] Nur Yildirim, Mahima Pushkarna, Nitesh Goyal, Martin Wattenberg, and Fernanda Viégas. 2023. Investigating How Practitioners Use Human-AI Guidelines: A Case Study on the People + AI Guidebook. In *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Hamburg, Germany) *(CHI '23)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 356, 13 pages.

https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3580900
[108] Junnan Yu, Andrea DeVore, and Ricarose Roque. 2021. Parental Mediation for Young Children's Use of Educational Media: A Case Study with Computational Toys and Kits. In *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Yokohama, Japan) *(CHI '21)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 475, 12 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445427
[109] Zoom Video Communications, Inc. 2024. Zoom Video Communications Inc. Zoom. https://zoom.us. Accessed: 2024-08-18.
[110] Theresa Züger, Philipp Mahlow, Daniel Pothmann, Katharina Mosene, Fabian Burmeister, Matthias Kettemann, and Wolfgang Schulz. 2025. Crediting Humans: A Systematic Assessment of Influencing Factors for Human-in-the-Loop Figurations in Consumer Credit Lending Decisions. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1281–1292. https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732086

A Additional Research Method Details

A.1 Interview Study

A.1.1 Interview Guide. We utilized a semi-structured interview approach to learn about the mediators' work. We developed a comprehensive interview script (Appendix B) focused on the following main themes: (1) mediator's background; (2) tasks and processes in mediation; (3) challenges faced in mediation; and (4) potential solutions and the role of AI in mediation. In our treatment of (3) and (4), we were motivated by the following questions:

- What are the current challenges in mediation that can be resolved using AI?
- What parts of the current process require human expertise and should not be replaced by AI?
- What are some solutions that have been tried already that have failed or succeeded? Give an example of a technology success and one technology failure.

Interviews lasted on average about 60 minutes, and written consent was obtained from the interviewees. We obtained IRB approval under our institution's exempt category for our interview study.

A.1.2 Participants. To recruit mediation experts, we cold-emailed individuals listed in well-known directories such as mediate.com, the American Arbitration Association [6], the Association for Conflict Resolution [33], and government directories of court-affiliated mediation programs. We also reached out to law school professors at our institution who teach mediation. In addition, we partnered with a local mediation organization that handles business and startup-related disputes. This organization referred mediators to our study.

This initial outreach produced our first set of interviewees. We then used snowball sampling [25], asking participants to refer expert colleagues. This approach helped ensure that all participants had relevant expertise.We continued recruiting through referrals and directory searches until we reached theoretical saturation, i.e., no new themes or insights emerged in our coding, and repeated patterns became clear [80].

We interviewed 21 professional mediators with experience across a range of domains. Participants specialized in Workplace Conflicts (9 mediators), Family or Divorce Disputes (7), Business Disputes (6), and Small Claims Court (4), with some working in more specialized areas such as Tribal-Federal Government Disputes (1), School and Community Conflicts (3), Institutional Disputes (1), and Labor Conflicts (1). All but one mediator worked across multiple domains, highlighting their multidisciplinary experience.

They had an average of 13.6 years of professional mediation experience (SD = 11.1), ranging from 1 to 38 years. All were certified or worked in a professional mediation role, and many held additional qualifications: 6 were lawyers or barristers, 2 were judges, 2 led mediation or ADR centers, and several were educators or researchers with advanced degrees (MSc or PhD) in conflict resolution. 11 of the 21 mediators were female and 10 were male. 16 of our mediators operate in the United States of America and 5 in the United Arab Emirates. Table 1 provides an anonymized overview of participants' credentials and experience.

A.1.3 Data Collection and Analysis. We conducted interviews over a 10-month period (May 2024 to February 2025). Of the 21 participants, only one declined to be recorded; for that session, we relied on detailed notes taken during the interview. For all others, we transcribed the Zoom recordings. We also included notes from a day-long mediation training two of the authors attended, provided by a local mediation organization.

After each interview, primary author coded the transcript in an exploratory and eclectic manner using Atlas.ti. They wrote and shared analytic memos summarizing early patterns. The memos guided weekly group discussions and shaped our analysis. Through several rounds of collaborative refinement (merging overlaps and removing duplicates), we reduced this set and grouped the codes into three themes through affinity diagramming, using an abductive approach [92]. We chose abductive coding, which combines deductive and inductive reasoning, to test ideas from mediation theories identified in our literature review (deductive) and to uncover gaps between mediation practice and technology use based on our data (inductive) [97].

After creating the initial codebook, the primary author applied it to all 21 interviews, including those originally used to create it, and refined the codes as new patterns emerged. Once all interviews were analyzed, the team discussed the findings and finalized the themes and insights presented in this document. The final codebook used for this paper is available in Appendix D.

A.2 Speculative Design

After several rounds of discussion, we selected three mediation case studies that included rich details, involved multiple stakeholders, and were described by interviewees as particularly challenging or meaningful learning experiences. The first two authors used diagramming to map out the key stakeholders, their interests, motivations, and relationships (See Appendix C).

This gave us a more detailed and case-specific view of the needs and struggles of mediators, as uncovered in our interviews (§3). Similar to the methods employed by past HCI studies [22], we then sketched out agent designs that could address those needs (§4). To keep these designs grounded, but forward-looking, we used ideas from speculative AI design[27, 96] and design fiction [11, 24, 72, 89]. Leveraged as a form of what-if analysis, speculative design is *"a form of design that thrives on imagination and aims to open up new perspectives on ... to create spaces for discussion and debate"* [28]. Similarly, design fiction embeds the speculative design artifact within a fictional world, becoming *"totems through which a larger story can be told"* [10]. These helped us imagine future agents who still responded to the real challenges of the interviews and had the capabilities suggested by the mediators. In doing so, we found that aligning an agent with certain stakeholders or values often meant sidelining others, even when the design prioritized mediation success or reflected the mediator's perspective (§5).

B Mediator Interview Script

The following is the script for our semi-structured interview with professional mediators. Each interview was scheduled for about an hour, and written consent was obtained from the interviewees.

B.1 Grounding Questions (for interviewer)

- What are the current challenges in mediation that can be resolved using AI?
- What parts of the current process require human expertise and should not be replaced by AI?
- What are some solutions known to have been tried already that have failed or succeeded?

B.2 Background

Intent: These questions are designed to learn about the interviewee's background and experience in the field of mediation.

- Would love to know more about your motivation, training, and background as a mediator.
- What are the kinds of cases you take on? Are there special parameters that define them?

B.3 Tasks and Processes

Intent: Our objective with these questions is to gain a thorough understanding of the procedural details in a mediator's practice. We aim for the interviewee to describe, in-depth, each step typically involved in mediating group conflicts. This detailed understanding will enable our research solutions to reflect the realities of a mediator's work more accurately.

- How do you prepare for a mediation session?
- Walk me through a typical mediation session, you can use the last session you held as an example. Possible follow-ups:
  - How does the session typically end?
  - What happens in the middle, especially when there is little to no progress?
  - How many sessions usually happen?
- What are some techniques that you use during the session and why?
- When do you think your work is "done" in a situation? Who decides?
- What are the metrics or ways to measure the success of a session?
- Tell me about your most successful mediation case. What steps did you actively take as a mediator to enable this success?
- Is there a set of theories or books you draw inspiration from when carrying out your mediation work?

B.4 Challenges

Intent: Group conflicts involve challenging conversations, meaning that mediating them might present unique challenges. With these questions, we want to elucidate the difficulties in assisting groups in resolving their conflicts, especially when the involved parties are at odds with the process the mediator delineates.

- Give me an example of a challenging mediation situation from your experience as a mediator. Why was it challenging?Looking back now - how would you manage this challenge alternatively today?
- What are other challenges you encounter when meditating?
- How do you go about solving challenge X? If you can't solve challenge X, what do you think is missing or needed to be able to solve it?
  - Talk to me more about this missing piece. Could you realize yourself entirely as a mediator?

B.5 Solutions

Intent: We want to understand the limits and possibilities of tools that can support mediation. We seek to engage our interviewees in discussions that will reveal how existing tools might be improved and what new tools could assist mediators. We can then use our interviewees' answers to directly motivate the solutions we can design.

- What tools do you use to help with your mediation work?
  - For preparation
  - During the process
  - For concluding the process
- What are some improvements you would like to see in tools or processes that you already use?
- There is a lot of conversation about AI assisting or aiding humans. What are the parts of the mediation process that could benefit from AI?

- Similarly, what should we tell AI designers about mediation - what parts can or should not replace humans by AI?
- Give an example of a tool or technology that you are aware of - either personal experience or based on knowledge from others, that has been helpful at mediation.
- Give an example of a tool or technology that you are aware of - either personal experience or based on knowledge from others, that has been tried and turned out not to be helpful at mediation.
- If you could imagine a tool that would make your life easier as a mediator, what would it do? Even if it seems magical or you feel you haven't fleshed it out, we would like to hear your thoughts.

B.6 Additional Question Bank (If time permits)

- How would you define mediation?
- What is the role of a mediator in the mediation process?
- What does a mediator need to do to accomplish their goals in the process and help the parties?
- What are some common misconceptions and expectations mediation participants have of the mediator?
- How can we explain to AI designers what part of your job should AI not take over?

C Diagramming

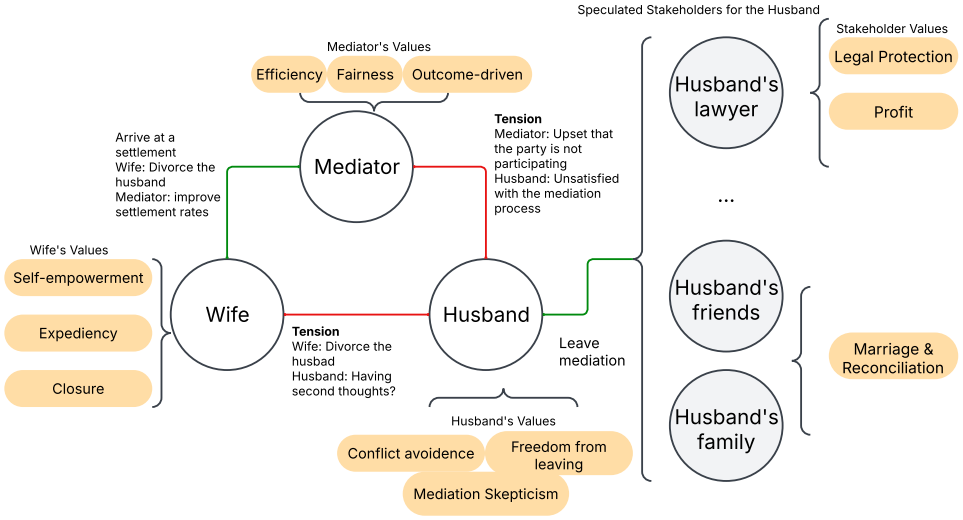

Fig. 5. Stakeholder needs, tensions and values in a divorce mediation case involving a husband who is disengaged from the mediation. This diagram maps the conflicting desires, tensions, and values each party considers throughout the mediation process.

D Codebook

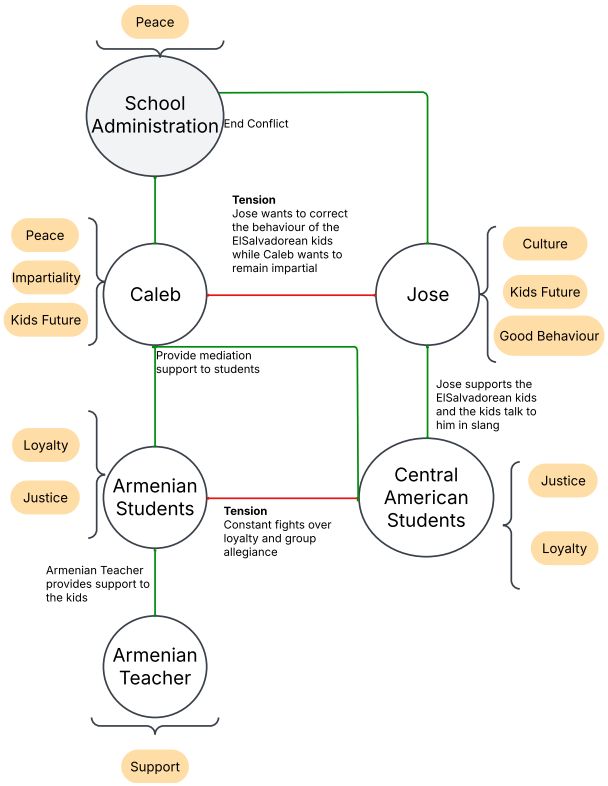

Fig. 6. Stakeholder needs, tensions and values in a school mediation case. The lead mediator and the co-mediator disagree on the approach to solve the conflicts between both of the student groups.

	Alias	Domains of Expertise	Credentials	Years of Experience
1	Juan	Small Claims Court	Certified Mediator	9
2	Lia	Small Claims Court Community Disputes	Certified Mediator	1
3	Kai	Small Claims Court Student Conflicts	Certified Mediator , Law student	1
4	Mae	Small Claims Court Workplace Conflicts	ADR Specialist, Lawyer	3
5	Zoe	Workplace Conflicts	Certified Mediator , PhD in Conflict Resolution	5
6	Zara	Workplace Conflicts	ADR Specialist	4
7	Ella	Workplace Conflicts Business Disputes	Certified Mediator Law Professor	30
8	Mike	Workplace Conflicts Family or Divorce Disputes	Judge, Founder of ADR center	38
9	Omar	Workplace Conflicts Family or Divorce Disputes Labor Disputes	Lawyer, Mediation Educator, Conflict Resolution Assoc. Member	28
10	Ivy	Workplace Conflicts Family or Divorce Disputes	Certified Mediator	23
11	Ana	Family or Divorce Disputes	Certified Mediator	28
12	Leo	Family or Divorce Disputes	Certified Mediator , Lawyer	16
13	Emma	Tribal vs. Federal Government Disputes, Institutional and Community Disputes	Certified Mediator , Mediation Coach, Conflict Resolution Faculty	15
14	Stephen	Family or Divorce Disputes Business Disputes	Certified Mediator	2
15	Ethan	Workplace Conflicts	Certified Mediator	2
16	Sophie	Workplace Conflicts Family or Divorce Disputes	Certified Mediator CEO of Mediation Organization	15
17	Noah	Business Disputes	Certified Mediator , Barrister	17
18	Grace	Business Disputes	Certified Mediator , Barrister	2
19	Owen	Business Disputes Community Disputes	Certified Mediator , Barrister	12
20	Lina	Business Disputes	Certified Mediator , Barrister	17
21	Caleb	School and Community Disputes	M.S. in Negotiation and PeaceBuilding	18

Table 1. Expertise and credentials of professional mediators interviewed in our study. Participants have been assigned anonymized aliases to protect their personal identifiable information.

Table 2. The following codebook was used to analyze the 21 mediator interviews presented in this paper. The authors developed this codebook after multiple rounds of exploratory and eclectic coding to familiarize themselves with the data. Through analytic memo discussion sessions, the authors discussed and consolidated the eclectic codes, refining them collaboratively to arrive at the version presented here. The table includes the following for each code: the code name, the description of the code, example quote(s), and a reference to where in our paper it was used.

Code	Description	Example Quote(s)	Section
Workflow: Codes on the various tasks in a mediator's workflow.			
Dispute Preparation			
Gathering Information	Various methods mediators use to gather information about an incoming mediation case; typically through pre-filled forms	*"I begin by gathering information about the particular case in question."*	3.1.1
Determining Fit	Mediators assess whether a case is appropriate for mediation given its complexity, context, and the parties' willingness to participate.	*"We don't deal with family disputes.... in terms of our jurisdiction through the courts, it is limited to commercial and civil matters"*	3.1.2
Setting Expectations and Agenda	Mediators explain the mediation process and align with the parties on the agenda to follow for the mediation session(s).	*"Once I understand the issue, I set the agenda, and I establish ground rules, before the mediation even begins."*	3.1.3.
Dispute Management			
Sharing Grievances	Parties begin expressing concerns through opening statements, while mediators work to uncover deeper underlying issues.	*"I like to have the party that brought the complaint go first, but it could be the other side. After that, you have the opening statement of the other party. And then the mediation itself begins"*	3.2.1
Facilitating Negotiation	Mediators leverage one or more tools in their toolkit to unpack the conflict, dispute, or grievance, enabling them to explore and craft options for resolution.	*"You want to ask open-ended questions; you don't want to be judgmental in your questions. You start off being very open-ended: 'Tell me more about the situation.'"*; *"I create a safe environment, it is very important, or else they would not want to divulge information to you... I believe all parties need different strategies to get them to open up all right."*	3.2.2
Steering to Convergence	Techniques to nudge and assist parties toward resolution by highlighting common ground, reality-checking, and offering recommendations.	*"The problem solving is almost done, now we're working together ... We're not working against one another."*; *"I've had a case like that where the husband wanted the wife on the street, did not want her to get anything from him.... And I believe that I tried my best to convince the husband, and came to a fair agreement between both of them."*	3.2.3

Table 2. Continued

Code	Description	Example Quote(s)	Section
Dispute Closure			
Finalizing Agreement	Parties reconcile towards a final plan of action, crafted by the mediator. Since this is non-binding, it remains up to the parties to adhere.	*"If we do reach an agreement, we offer multiple ways to memorialize that agreement for cases that are not in small claims court... It could just be an oral agreement, it could be a partial agreement or a full agreement. It could be that they agree to mediate again... So there's a very broad range of possible outcomes. "*	3.3.1
Collecting Feedback	Mediators gather feedback on their performance from the parties to enhance their skills.	*"We send out to each party 10 question survey through surveymonkey to get feedback."*	3.3.1
Struggles: Codes on the different challenges a mediator faces.			
Improvisation through framework gaps			
Communities of Practice	Mediators rely on their colleagues for guidance and expertise.	*"If I anticipate a case will be particularly challenging for any reason, I like to consult with my colleagues."*	3
Decision-making on the Fly	Mediators make impromptu decisions in a mediation session when choosing appropriate strategies or tactics to apply.	*"Sometimes I'll break rules if it feels right, and I've done it in front of my boss. Inside I'll feel like, "Oh, my gosh! I'm so afraid he's going to bring it up after." But then it'll work out beautifully, and I will get praise later for trusting my instinct."*	3
Adopting Novel Techniques	Mediators invent novel techniques for their individual processes.	*"One of my friends developed a simulation involving imaginary nations to develop the agenda"*	3
Invisible Work			
Self & Other Emotion Regulation	Mediators must manage their own emotions and that of the parties.	*"I try and maintain a very calm posture and make sure that I don't provoke emotion even higher."*	3
Case-specific Knowledge Acquisition	Mediators must research information specific to each case.	*"I've had people climbing up over the table to go and kick the other one in the head"*	3
Administrative Overhead	Mediators must manage scheduling and administrative burdens to carry out a session.	*"Well, logistical issues come with organizing and Attending the hearing location."*;*"there's huge amount of menial labor ... [in] trying to reach parties. Voice mails ... could be automated ... [and] sending consent forms ... it could really reduce our caseload."*	3
Steering without Agency			
Value Persuasion & Trust-building	Mediators must build trust with the parties to keep them engaged in the process.	*"Trust is everything that we do, and if people don't trust me, then I can't be an effective mediator."*	3
Focus on Communication, not Agreement	Mediators must focus on communication since they don't have binding authority over the parties.	*"The mediator's job is not to decide. The minute the mediator decides or tells people what to do, they're no longer a mediator. They're now more of a consultant, an advice-giver, an arbitrator, or a judge""*	3

Table 2. Continued

Code	Description	Example Quote(s)	Section
Needs: Codes on what mediators requested AI could do.			
Agreement Drafting	Using AI to draft mediator-led agreements.	*"In the drafting of the final agreement, if you get to a state where you can agree on terms, the AI can assist with that too."*	3.3.1
Comprehensive Information Gathering	Using AI to assist in gathering information.	*"I am thinking of a ChatGPT kind of thing that does the initial phone call to gather information... when we get the referral form, there may be 3 or 4 sentences if we're lucky."*	3.1.1
Information Visualization	Using AI to visualize points of contention and negotiated agreements during a mediation session.	*"A very exciting opportunity would be visualizing information. You can visualize arguments, the parties' positions, to see the points of contention in the arguments themselves."*	3.2.2, 4
Non-disruptive Co-mediation	Using AI as a co-mediator within the mediation room.	*"I wonder if I could put into AI: 'Hey, these are the two people, and they are just at an impasse. What can you offer me as a way to help them break through?"'*	3.2.2
Follow-up	Using AI to follow up with the parties to gather feedback on the mediation session and to check whether the agreed-upon solutions worked.	*"Maybe some sort of automatic follow-up because, as of right now... We ask people to fill out the survey, they get an email with the SurveyMonkey link. People fill it out, people don't fill it out, and then somebody has to kind of follow up on that.".*	3.3.1
Logistical Support	Using AI to assist with the logistics of the mediation case, such as scheduling sessions.	*"there's huge amount of menial labor ... [in] trying to reach parties. Voice mails ... could be automated ... [and] sending consent forms ... it could really reduce our caseload."*	3
AI Note-taking	Using AI to help with note-taking.	*"Having a robot basically... listen for issues and take notes."*	
Agreement Drafting	Using AI to draft mediator-led agreements.	*"In the drafting of the final agreement, if you get to a state where you can agree on terms, the AI can assist with that too."*	3.3.1
Comprehensive Information Gathering	Using AI to assist in gathering information.	*"I am thinking of a ChatGPT kind of thing that does the initial phone call to gather information... when we get the referral form, there may be 3 or 4 sentences if we're lucky."*	3.1.1
Information Visualization	Using AI to visualize points of contention and negotiated agreements during a mediation session.	*"A very exciting opportunity would be visualizing information. You can visualize arguments, the parties' positions, to see the points of contention in the arguments themselves."*	3.2.2, 4
Non-disruptive Co-mediation	Using AI as a co-mediator within the mediation room.	*"I wonder if I could put into AI: 'Hey, these are the two people, and they are just at an impasse. What can you offer me as a way to help them break through?"'*	3.2.2
Follow-up	Using AI to follow up with the parties to gather feedback on the mediation session and to check whether the agreed-upon solutions worked.	*"Maybe some sort of automatic follow-up because, as of right now... We ask people to fill out the survey, they get an email with the SurveyMonkey link. People fill it out, people don't fill it out, and then somebody has to kind of follow up on that.".*	3.3.1

Table 2. Continued

Code	Description	Example Quote(s)	Section
Logistical Support	Using AI to assist with the logistics of the mediation case, such as scheduling sessions.	*"there's huge amount of menial labor ... [in] trying to reach parties. Voice mails ... could be automated ... [and] sending consent forms ... it could really reduce our caseload."*	3
AI note-taking	Using AI to help with note-taking.	*"Having a robot basically... listen for issues and take notes."*	3
Miscellaneous: Additional codes used to analyze our interviews.			
Alignment	Code to capture potential AI alignment discussions or cases in mediation.	*"They were speaking a little bit of Spanish slang with him on the side ... and he got caught up a little bit in the emotion of it and began doing something you are not supposed to do in a mediation: He was judging them by saying you shouldn't say that or why did you guys do that? You know that is wrong...I innocuously started cutting [Jose] off a little bit and then redirecting the whole room conversation away from that."*	4
Business Mediator	Code to capture mediators who conduct mediations with large businesses.	*"I take in predominantly commercial corporate business cases or cases that have to do with an ongoing business."*	1
Small Claims Mediator	Code to capture mediators who handle small claims court cases.	*"Most of those civil court cases that I administer and mediate are small claims."*	1
Workplace Mediator	Code to capture mediators who mediate workplace conflicts.	*"I was doing my judging and mediating workplace conflicts for city Government employees."*	1
Family and Divorce Mediator	Code to capture mediators who handle family and divorce cases.	*"I've been doing divorce mediation for almost 30 years."*	1
Community Mediator	Code to capture mediators who work in community mediation.	*"So I worked a lot with young dispossessed communities, mostly BIPOC communities"*	1
Independent Contractor	Code to capture mediators who work as independent contractors.	*"I started my own practice.. So I've been on my own for 9 years."*	1
ProAI	Code to capture mediators who were more in favor of using AI in mediation and how it should be used.	*"I think the role of AI in mediation is distilling what the positions of the parties is showing where they differ"*	4, 3
Caucusing	Code to capture mediators who use caucusing during the mediation session.	*"In a caucs people are always more willing to tell me things privately than they are willing to say in the room with the other person there."*	3
Open-ended Questions	Code to capture mediators who ask open-ended questions during the mediation session.	*"And then we start moving on to generating options, where I ask open-ended questions to guide each person into generating their own options."*	3.2.2
Looping	Code to capture mediators who use looping (summarizing and reflecting back what the parties said)..	*"One technique is looping, which is a form of active listening where you repeat back what someone says in your own words to make sure you understand. You then ask them, "Did I get that right?" and continue until everything has been accurately captured."*	3.2.2