

The Dynamics of Conflict Escalation

1. Each party considers the other one as the sole source of all problems and frustrations.
2. The parties constantly add new conflicting issues. The frequency, scope and complexity of disputes increase.
On the other hand, the parties tend to greatly simplify the situation.
3. The parties develop simplistic explanatory models with respect to the causes and effects of the conflict.
4. The parties try to involve an increasing number of people in the conflict in order to get more support for their own cause.
At the same time, they personalize the conflict more and more.
5. Each party tries to force the other one to give in, while gradually raising the threat of violence. The result of this is however exactly the opposite of the intended effect: the people on the other side get more and more aggressive themselves.

Source: Friedrich Glasl, *Konfliktmanagement – Ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater*, Verlag Paul Haupt, Bern / Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart, 6. Auflage, 1999