

Chapter 3

On Stages of Conflict Escalation

1
2

Jens Allwood and Elisabeth Ahlsén

3

3.1 Introduction

4

An issue in the theory of conflict is whether there are stages (steps, phases, or levels—the terminology varies) in conflict escalation (and de-escalation). If so, how many are there and what are their identifying characteristics?

5
6
7

A prerequisite for identifying stages in conflict is a definition of what a conflict is. In this paper, we take the following definition (cf. Allwood 1992) as our point of departure:

8
9
10

Conflict: A and B are in conflict = A and/or B believe they have incompatible interests and/or perform negative actions against each other.

11
12

3.2 Taxonomies of Conflict

13

There are a number of aspects that can be considered in characterizing and classifying conflicts. Some possible taxonomies of conflict are:

14
15

1. The number of participants. Is it a two-party (bilateral) or three-party (trilateral) conflict, or are many parties involved (multilateral conflict)?
2. The degree of interactivity: Is it a one-way or a two-way conflict?
3. The degree of overtness: Is it an overt or a covert conflict?

16
17
18
19

An *overt* conflict occurs when two agents are in overt conflict, if they both experience grounds for conflictual action against each other and as a result take

20
21

J. Allwood (✉) • E. Ahlsén
Department of Applied IT, SCCIIL Interdisciplinary Center, University of Gothenburg,
41296 Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: jens@ling.gu.se

such action. The experienced grounds for conflict can, but need not, correspond to any actual grounds for conflict.

A *covert* conflict can either be an actual two-party conflict which is concealed from another interested third party or a case where conflictual action is taken by one agent against another agent, who is unaware of the action, but who would, if the action were discovered, experience it as conflict generating and take countermeasures.

4. The distribution of power between the conflicting parties: Is it a symmetric (equal power) or asymmetric (unequal power) conflict?
5. The type of activity, organization, and topic which is involved in the conflict: Is it a salary/wage conflict, a courtroom trial, bargaining in a marketplace, a political conflict, a peace negotiation, a dowry negotiation, a divorce negotiation, or a family conflict (e.g., parent-child about pocket money, staying out at night, homework, husband-wife about house cleaning, etc.)?
6. What modalities are applicable—alethic, deontic, and epistemic? Is the conflict manifest vs. latent; actual vs. potential, possible, actual, and necessary; permitted vs. obligatory; or conceivable vs. certain?

A related distinction is that between normative and descriptive aspects of conflict. A *normative* perspective deals with the question of how conflicts should be pursued in different activities. A *descriptive* perspective studies how conflicts are actually pursued in different activities and organization. A *possible potential* perspective, finally, asks how a conflict can/could be pursued.

7. The type of medium of communication involved in the conflict: Is it face-to-face, telephone, written (letter, e-mail, etc.), chat, videoconference, or other Internet-based synchronous communication?

These taxonomic features can be used to classify both long-term conflicts over a period of time and short-term conflicts as in a short conflict episode or particular instance of a conflict.

3.3 Responding to Conflictual Communication

There are several options for reacting and responding to conflictual communicative action.

The main options are: (1) acceptance of other's claim, (2) rejection, (3) avoidance, and (4) prevention of conflict.

The manner in which conflict is initiated and pursued through communication and the responses to and management of this communication can be the basis for identifying possible stages or steps in conflict escalation and de-escalation. In the following, we will present five suggested models of stages in conflict and then turn to a specific type of conflict (televised political debate), where we will try to identify potential stages, in order to see to what extent the five models are applicable. Finally, we will, on the basis of our analysis, compare political debates with other types of conflictual communication.

3.4 Suggested Models of Stages of Conflict

63

Different authors have suggested different numbers of stages and different ways of characterizing them, e.g., Friedrich Glasl (1997) suggests nine steps of conflict, Douglas Noll (2000) suggests five phases, and Eric Brahm (2003) suggests eight phases. Some authors do not suggest a definite number of stages; rather, they give lists of possible stages. Examples of this are the book *Everyone Can Win* by Cornelius et al. (1997) and the book *Interpersonal Conflict Escalation Levels* by Hocker and Wilmot (1991). See Table 3.1, below, for a summary of the stages suggested in Glasl (1997), Noll (2000), Brahm (2003), Cornelius et al. (1997), and Hocker and Wilmot (1991).

If we compare the different models, we can see that all the models of conflict escalation, except Brahm's, end quite dramatically with full-blown conflicts, involving mutual "annihilation" (Glasl), "regression" (Noll), possible "violence" (Cornelius et al.), and "deadly combat" (Hocker and Wilmot). Only Brahm provides a less pessimistic view, going from "stalemate" (step 5), via "de-escalation" and "settlement/resolution," to "post-conflict" and, finally, "peace and reconciliation." Most of the models are, thus, models only of conflict escalation and do not include the possibility of de-escalation.

The differences in the number of stages and in the labeling of the stages indicate that the different authors have somewhat different types of conflict in focus, and that most of them are models of conflict of a long-term, very serious type of conflict. At least three of them (Glasl, Cornelius et al., and Hocker and Wilmot) contain escalation that involves moving from words to action, from verbal threats to trying to hurt another person physically. This type of escalation is not typical for most everyday conflictual communicative interactions that often mainly contain argumentation, discussion, and perhaps quarrel.

However, some of the stages in all of the models can, to some extent, be applied to more short-term, nonphysical types of conflict, but, as we have seen, most of them primarily have a focus on more long-term conflicts, being applicable to conflicts with more of a long-term perspective than conversations, including also conflicts between groups and nations, leading to very serious confrontations like suicide bombings or war.

One way to capture the difference between different types of conflict is to consider the nature of the social activity they develop in. In general, different social activities can contain different types of conflicts, connected with different stages of conflict development. The differences between activities and conflicts may, in turn, require an assumption of different conflict stages for the most satisfying analysis in a theoretical model. Finding a suitable model of steps or stages of conflict may therefore be dependent on identifying the type of social activity where the conflict is occurring. In many cases, also a subtype of that type of activity may be what is required to understand a particular type of conflict. In a long-term conflict, this can, for example, mean identifying a set of steps or stages of conflict in spoken interaction (taking place during one particular interaction), and then in a

Table 3.1 Examples of models of stages, steps, or levels of conflict escalation

Glasl	Noll	Comelius et al.	Hocker and Wilmot	Brahm
<p>0: <i>Dialogue</i></p> <p>1: <i>Discussion</i>—hardening positions</p> <p>2: <i>Debate</i>—polarization</p> <p>3: <i>Running over the other</i>—own goals</p> <p>4: <i>Harassment</i>—scurrilous images</p> <p>5: <i>Loss of face</i></p> <p>6: <i>Strategical threats</i></p> <p>7: <i>Painful attacks</i>—cause damage</p> <p>8: <i>Elimination</i>—attacking “nerve center”</p> <p>9: <i>Together down the abyss</i>—annihilation</p>	<p>1. Part of normal, everyday life. Even good relationships have <i>moments of conflict</i></p> <p>2. The parties fluctuate between cooperation and competition</p> <p>3. <i>Concrete action</i>—no common solution</p> <p>4. <i>Cognitive function regresses</i>—know but do not consider each other’s perspectives</p> <p>5. Progressive regression</p>	<p>1. <i>Uncomfortableness</i>: an inner, intuitive feeling that something is going wrong</p> <p>2. <i>Incidents</i>: irritation</p> <p>3. <i>Misunderstanding</i>: communication is deficient</p> <p>4. <i>Tension</i> negative attitudes. Consciously or unconsciously people hurt each other</p> <p>5. <i>Crisis</i>: repressed emotions release. Violence can appear</p>	<p>1: A problem to be solved</p> <p>2: A difference</p> <p>3: Confrontation</p> <p>4: Fight and/or flight</p> <p>5: Deadly combat</p>	<p>1. No conflict</p> <p>2. Latent conflict</p> <p>3. Emergence</p> <p>4. Escalation</p> <p>5. (Hurting) Stalemate</p> <p>6. De-escalation</p> <p>7. Settlement/ resolution</p> <p>8. Post-conflict</p> <p>9. Peace and reconciliation</p>

t3.1

further analysis of the conflict, other specifying stages of conflict may be required in the interactions that are connected with the conflict. Examples of conflict that might involve slightly different stages with regard to communication are a trial in court, a political debate, a family quarrel, an argument in a work team, etc. The considerations above, therefore, lead us to propose an activity-based approach in order to identify typical or possible steps of conflict in the communicative spoken interaction of different social activities.

3.5 An Activity-Based Approach to Interpreting and Describing Stages of Conflict

We thus suggest that there is not only one correct answer to the issue of how many stages of conflict escalation there are and what these stages are. Rather, we think that the number and types of stages must be related to the type of conflict we are concerned with. Therefore, different types of conflict may typically show different numbers and stages with different properties.

We will illustrate and support this claim below by an analysis of the number and types of stages found in short conflict episodes, occurring between politicians in televised political debates from different countries (Germany, Italy, Greece, and the USA). The debates involve different types of conflict episodes, characterized by more or less aggressive, accusing, scornful, derisive, ironic, triumphant, defiant, resigned, etc. stances and behavior.

An analysis of the “social signals” involved in these stances, i.e., the multimodal expressions occurring at different moments in the conflict episodes has yielded a set of clusters of behavior, which can be used for identifying possible stages, steps, or phases in the different types of episodes.

In our analysis, we focus on the stances and behavior exhibited by the politicians, rather than on, for example, the long-term consequences, which are the focus of several of the models we have described above, for example, in Glasl’s nine-step model. This difference in perspective we think illustrates how different types of conflict also enable a focus on different conflict affordances in the data and in this way may give rise to different models of conflict escalation, suitable for different purposes.

3.6 Method

3.6.1 *Material*

In order to analyze and illustrate stages of conflict in televised political debates, we have used a corpus consisting of four political debates occurring in three different countries, Germany, Italy, and the USA:

1. A German debate on whether it was correct to support rebels in Libya with military interventions (German debate “Enthaltung ist keine Haltung,” that is, “Abstention is no position”) 141–143
2. A German debate, “Atomkrieger” (“Nuclear wars”), where the health and moral implications of using nuclear energy are discussed among the participants of the debate 144–146
3. An Italian debate “Giuliano Pisapia vs. Letizia Moratti,” which is an election debate of the two main candidates running for the position of Mayor of Milan (2011) 147–149
4. “Republican Debate October 18, 2011” or “Perry vs. Romney”—two candidates running in the primary elections of the US Republican Party—a debate concerning the nomination of the party’s candidate for running for the US presidency 150–152

3.6.2 Analysis 153

For transcribing the videos, we used the Gothenburg transcription standard and the modified standard orthography (MSO6) (Nivre 2000, 2004), while annotations of the videos were done using ANVIL (Kipp 2001). For vocal features, we used PRAAT (Boersma and Weenink 2013). 154–157

The analysis was based on combinations of features of behavior expressing combinations of affective-epistemic states (cf. Allwood et al. 2012), occurring in different stages of conflict episodes in the political debates. These stages will be discussed below in relation to (1) the exhibited behavior of the involved partners (Sect. 3.7) and (2) the different taxonomies of conflict mentioned above (Sect. 3.8). 158–162

3.7 Stages of Conflict in Televised Political Debates 163

The interpretation of conflict in terms of stages is, as discussed above, not straightforward. However, based on the corpus of televised political debates, a number of stages can be proposed for this particular activity. 164–166

3.7.1 Stage 1: Early Phase—Pre-conflict/Latent Conflict 167

This phase is characterized by overtly fairly “neutral” and calm stances. One party talks, making claims, which may contain arguments, that the other party can find offensive. The purpose of the activity is a political debate between persons that can be assumed to be antagonists so it is typically characterized by initial latent conflict. Among the five models of conflict stages, described above, only Brahm’s model recognizes this stage. 168–173

Fig. 3.1 Lafontaine starts his contribution (Debate 1)



Lafontaine has just been asked by the TV host what he thinks about the NATO attacks against Libya and starts his answer by gazing at the TV host, leaning against the back of his chair (Fig. 3.1). 174
175
176

3.7.2 Stage 2: Initial (Confrontative) 177
Claim + Challenge/Attack 178

In this phase, a participant attacks or challenges the previous or present main speaker, adopting an accusing stance, typically with one hand forward and the index finger raised. The attacker is provocative, sometimes sarcastic and sometimes interrupting the main speaker. 179
180
181
182

Attacks of this type also reoccur in the following phases from both sides. Among the five models of conflict stages, Glasl's "discussion" and "debate" stages are related to this stage, as are Hocker and Wilmot's "confrontation" and Brahm's "emergence." As we can see, the different models are on different levels of abstraction and focus on different aspects of the interaction. 183
184
185
186
187



Fig. 3.2 Kienzle attacks Lafontaine (Debate 1)

After around 30 s, Kienzle tries to interrupt Lafontaine accusing him of 188
 abandoning the Libyan rebels. Kienzle leans his upper torso forward and points 189
 his index finger at Lafontaine (Fig. 3.2). 190

Kienzle: “Wenn ich Sie richtig verstehe . . . Wenn ich Sie richtig verstehe . . . a-la, 191
 jetzt, kein Wahlkampfreden, kein Wahlkampfreden.” (“If I get your point . . . If I get 192
 your point . . . a-la. No electoral propaganda now. No electoral propaganda.”) 193

3.7.3 Stage 3: Response to Accusation 194

A challenge is usually met by a response. The stance of the responding party is 195
 often annoyed, irritated, or even angry. The response can take different alternative 196
 forms. It can, for example, be a smile, trying to make the attack (or the attacker) 197
 seem ridiculous, irrelevant, or unimportant. Very often, however, the response is 198
 a direct counterattack, which can concern the content of the attack (Fig. 3.3a, b 199
 above) and/or the right to speak (claiming the floor back). The speaker can also 200
 show exaggerated surprise or shock at the attacker’s utterance or impoliteness in 201
 interrupting (Fig. 3.4). Finally, the attacked speaker can simply override the attacker 202
 by just continuing his/her speech and ignoring the attack (Fig. 3.5). 203

In relation to the five models of conflict stages, Glasl’s “debate,” Hocker and 204
 Wilmot’s “confrontation,” and possibly Brahm’s “escalation” are relevant, if we 205
 allow for the fact that the stages in their original form probably in all cases were to 206
 be seen as stages in more long-term conflicts than the ones we are considering.



Fig. 3.3 Moratti responding: irritated (a) and also accusing (counterattack) (b) (Debate 3)

Moratti (Fig. 3.3a): “la commissione antimafia in consiglio comunale non 207
 avrebbe avuto competenze/noi abbiamo chiesto al prefetto e sulla base di quello 208
 che la prefettura ci ha indicato abbiamo preso una decisione” (“the anti-mafia 209
 commission in Milan would have had no powers/we asked the prefect and based 210
 on what he told us we took our decision”) 211
 212

Moratti (Fig. 3.3b): “credo che l{0}avvocato pisapia queste cose dovrebbe saperle” (“*i think lawyer pisapia should know these things*”) 213

Fig. 3.4 Roth (*woman second from the left*) responding with shocked surprise/outrage, posing a question as counterattack (Debate 2)



Roth: “Ah! Es ist nicht eine Aufgabe einer Kirche die ethische Begründung für eine Technologie in Frage zu stellen, die nicht beherrschbar ist?!“ (“*Ah! It is not the duty of a Church to question the ethical justification of a technology, which is not controllable?!*”) 214
215
216
217

Fig. 3.5 Lafontaine overriding the attacker, keeping the floor (Debate 1)



Lafontaine: das ist kein wahlkampfreden das ist eine frage... warum wo + warum... es war... es... (*this is no electoral propaganda this is a question... why wh + why... it was... it...*) 218
219
220
221

Kienzle then interrupts again and accuses Lafontaine of not answering his question, but instead giving a propaganda speech, his voice raised and his hand raised, pointing his index finger (“keine Wahlkampfreden” “*no electoral propaganda,*” repeated). Kienzle’s contribution overlaps with Lafontaine’s but Lafontaine keeps his turn. He produces this part of his argument raising his voice, moving his upper torso forward in Kienzle’s direction while holding his head upward. 222
223
224
225
226
227

3.7.4 Stage 4: Further Escalation of Conflict

228

This phase contains continued and often repeated attacks and counterattacks, usually with increasing intensity. Affective-epistemic stances are angry and accusing with behavioral features such as sarcasm or shouting while overlapping other speakers, leaning forward with hand forward, often with the forefinger raised. Considering the five models of conflict stages, Glasl's "debate," Hocker and Wilmot's "confrontation," and Brahm's "escalation" stages are still relevant which reinforce and illustrate that these stages are less temporally fine grained than the stages we are suggesting.

Fig. 3.6 Herles responding to the counterattack from Roth above with anger and sarcasm (Debate 2)



Herles: "Da wird eine Technologie zum absolut Bösen erklärt! Weiche Satan!" ("Then a technology is declared as absolutely evil! Be gone Satan!")/shouting (Fig. 3.6)

236

237

238

Fig. 3.7 Kienzle and Lafontaine arguing about the right to speak (Debate 1)



239

Lafontaine, irritated, raises his hand and counterattacks Kienzle's (this is not electoral propaganda). Contributions are overlapping all the time. Lafontaine, then, annoyed reminds his interlocutor of good manners: "Herr Kienzle, wenn Sie höflich sind, lassen Sie mich den satz zu ende führen, dann kommen Sie eher dran (*"Mister Kienzle, if you are polite and let me finish my sentence your turn will come sooner"*)." Lafontaine continues, now more vehemently, showing both passionate engagement and anger. After only a few seconds, Kienzle interrupts him again, repeating his accusation (Fig. 3.7).

3.7.5 Stage 5: Climax

The climax in a conflict can contain both parties shouting, leaning forward, and speaking at the same time, with one hand forward and almost standing up (from a sitting position). Comparing with the five models of conflict stages, Glasl's "debate," Hocker and Wilmot's "confrontation," and Brahm's "escalation" with the possible addition of Cornelius et al. "crisis" stage are still the relevant which again illustrate that these stages are less temporally fine grained than the stages we are suggesting.

Fig. 3.8 Climax of the conflict between Kienzle and Lafontaine (Debate 1)



Kienzle interrupts Lafontaine again, now shouting and again pointing at Lafontaine with his arm and hand. Both interlocutors are now shouting, sitting with their upper torsos forward, using one arm/hand with the index finger stretched pointing at the opponent, in a fight to gain the floor and the sympathy of the audience (Fig. 3.8).

3.7.6 Stage 6: Superiority—Having Won and Silence/Hesitation, Having Lost

261

262

A conflict sequence in a political debate can be interrupted by the program host or by other speakers. If it continues until one party wins, however, the winning party often exhibits a stance of superiority, looking determined and triumphant, often with raised chin (Figs. 3.9b and 3.10b) and gazing intently at the opponent (Fig. 3.9a) but also at the program host and/or the audience and sometimes also showing a triumphant smile (Fig. 3.10b). Returning to the five models of conflict stages, Glasl's "loss of face," Hocker and Wilmot's "fight or flight," and Brahm's "post-conflict" are possibly relevant. The comparison again points to the differences in perspective built into the five models, where perhaps, the most important difference in perspective is that our suggestion concerns short-term conflict episodes, while the other models, with the exception of Eric Brahm's model which is more neutral from a temporal point of view, concern long-term conflicts.



Fig. 3.9 The winner triumphant (a): Lafontaine (b)

Lafontaine, having counter-accused Kienzle of being cynical, turns his face in the direction of two other participants, i.e., the TV host and another participant in the debate. Then, he checks whether his opponent wants to continue the fight, gazing directly at Kienzle for 3 s (Fig. 3.9a). Kienzle has no more arguments and drops the fight: he is speechless, he does not make any gestures, though he is watching Lafontaine, the winner.

274

275

276

277

278

279

280



Fig. 3.10 The winner triumphant (a): Roth and Romney (Debates 2 and 4) (b)

Fig. 3.11 The defeated silent/hesitant—Perry (Debate 4)



3.8 Comparing Conflictual Communication in Different Social Activities

281
282

3.8.1 Political Debate, Quarrel Between Neighbors, and Conflict in a Work Group

283
284

As we have suggested above, a relevant question is whether the phases suggested for political debates are also found in conflicts taking place in other social activities, and, if so, how similar or different the phases are in different activities. Two other types of conflict we have examined are “quarrel between neighbors” and “conflict in a work group.” If we compare these three activities, illustrated in the table below, we can see how different the conditions for conflict are in the three selected activities

As we can see in Table 3.2, the initial phase can be similar in the conflict between neighbors and conflict in a work group, but is likely to be different, in terms of whether there is a latent conflict from the beginning, as is the case in a political debate. A latent conflict may perhaps also occur, but need not do so in the other two activities. If we turn to the goal of the activity, there are major differences in what can be achieved and what the best outcome is for the participants in the

three activities. This also applies to the expected result. These differences in goals and expected results will affect the type of conflict that occurs. The presence of an audience and of a leader or mediator is most likely in the political debates and would have a fairly different role in the conflict between neighbors or in a conflict in a work group.

3.8.2 Activity Comparison in Relation to Taxonomies of Conflict

In relation to the taxonomies of conflict, presented in Sect. 3.2, a political debate can be a two-party conflict or involve more participants, but often, there are two main contenders or sometimes two main groups in conflict. The relation between number of participants and the occurrence of bystanders and some type of audience can be dynamic, so that it is sometimes hard to know who is actually involved and who is a bystander or part of the audience. A neighbor conflict also typically involves two main parties (which can be groups), and a work group conflict can be between two or more parties. In the two latter cases, however, there is often no audience, whereas an audience is essential and the main real addressee in a political debate. Thus, many of the “stances” in the political debate, such as pretending outrage, sarcasm/irony and a triumphant look, gazing, and perhaps smiling demonstratively, are meant for the audience and might, for that reason, not be as prominent in the other activities.

The political debate is typically a two-way conflict, while in both the other types of activity, the conflict can be one-way or two-way. Political debates are also clear cases of overt conflicts, where exposing a conflict is actually one of the goals of the activity. The fact that the political debates are televised and in front of an audience gives them a more public and “demonstrative” function than the other two types, which are typically conducted in a small group or just between two persons.

Another related difference is that while political debates typically have a win-lose goal, the other two activities would often both benefit from some kind of solution, compromise, or reconciliation. Even though the other types of conflict can escalate and have a winner, this is less often the optimal solution in these activities, whereas it standardly is in the political debate. Strategies and stances aiming to promote joint solutions, compromises, mediation, etc. are, therefore, not very prominent in the political conflict (even though the moderator might sometimes attempt calming the argument down), but are more important in the other types.

The distribution of power can be symmetrical or asymmetrical in all the activities, depending on other circumstances. In political debates, it is usually known which of the participants has more voters than the other and which participant might be in power, e.g., part of the government, there may also be differences in political experience, thus, power differences are often present.

Political debates represent manifest, actual conflicts, rather than latent or potential conflicts, whereas this need not be as clear in the other two types. The conflict in

Table 3.2 Conditions for communicative conflict in three types of social activities

	Political debate	Quarrel between neighbors	Conflict in a work group
16.1 Initial phase	No initial unbiased dialog Latent conflict	Initial friendly dialogue or latent conflict	Initial dialog more common
16.2 Goal	Goal to win audience, voters Not to agree	Goal to win argument over some practical problem, e.g., a fence	Goal to carry out a common task, which all will benefit from
16.3 Expected result	One party wins	One party wins or compromise or breakdown	One party or the majority takes over or break up in subgroups, compromise or breakdown Task needs to be completed
16.4 Audience	Studio and TV audience/voters	No audience Or other neighbors	No audience
16.5 Leader/mediator	Talk show host Intervention	No mediator/chairman No intervention	No mediator/chairman, except possible self-selected group member No intervention

a political debate is in a sense necessary. To use the terminology of the taxonomy in Sect. 3.2, it is both permitted and obligatory, as well as certain. These properties are not the same in neighbor conflicts or work group conflicts, which very well can be merely latent and potential/possible, actual and nonpermitted as well as conceivable without being certain.

3.8.3 *The Relation Between Activity Differences and Stages/Steps/Phases in Conflict*

In summary, the conflicts in political debates in most respects represent very different conditions than conflict in the other two social activities they have been compared with above. Especially the beginning and the end of a conflict episode can be very different—the other two activity types often do not start with claims, instead they can start with behavior from one party which irritates the other party, possibly at first with only covert reactions. In contrast, in the political debates, there are initially usually a number of potentially confrontative claims. The three activities also vary in terms of what responses may be expected. If claims are made, acceptance of the other's claim, avoidance, and prevention of conflict are suitable in the neighbor and work group conflict cases, but not really in the political debate, because of the different purposes of the activity types. Further, even though escalation phases contain similarities in behavior, they also contain differences, depending on the different conditions, i.e., especially on the presence of an audience (in the political debate both a studio and a TV audience), which is the main addressee, and also on the more or less ritualized overt expression of conflict in political debates.

Even if manifested in somewhat different ways, the occurrence of phases of challenge/attack, response, and escalation seems to be common to most overt conflicts in all the three cases, but necessary and “obligatory” only in the political debate. The early phase can be very different between the activities, and the climax and win-lose phases are probably more common in the political debate and have alternatives like compromise and reconciliation in the two other cases.

Thus, the occurrence of stages in conflict as well as their labeling and description has to be related to the social activity in which it is pursued, in order to be detailed enough to capture stages in different types of conflict. We have also seen that the differences between types of conflict have resulted in differences between the different models that have been suggested to describe stages in conflict development and that for this reason, it would be desirable for future models to more explicitly state what type of conflict the model of stages is supposed to describe. Finally, we have suggested a six-stage model to capture conflict escalation in televised political debates.

Acknowledgments The research that has led to this work has been supported by the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013), under grant agreement no. 231287(SSPNet).

References

377

- Allwood J (1992) The academic seminar as an arena of conflict and conflict resolution. Gothenburg papers in theoretical linguistics 67. University of Gothenburg, Department of Linguistics 378
379
- Allwood J, Chindamo M, Ahlsén E (2012) On identifying conflict related stances. Proceedings of IEEE SocialCom, Amsterdam 2012 380
381
- Boersma P, Weenink D (2013) Praat: doing phonetics by computer [Computer program]. Version 5.3.51. <http://www.praat.org/>. Retrieved 2 June 2013 382
383
- Brahm E (2003) Conflict stages. In: Burgess G, Burgess H (eds) Beyond intractability. Conflict information consortium. University of Colorado, Boulder, Posted: September 2003 384
385
- Cornelius H, Faire S (2007) Everyone can win: responding to conflict constructively. Simon & Schuster, Sydney 386
387
- Glasl F (1997) Konfliktmanagement. Ein Handbuch fuer Fuehrungskraefte, Beraterinnen und Berater, 5, erweiterte Auflage. Verlag Paul Haupt, Bern 388
389
- Hocker JL, Wilmot WW (1991) Interpersonal conflict. William C. Brown, Dubuque, IA 390
- Kipp M (2001) [Anvil-agenericannotationtoolformultimodaldialogue](#). Proceedings of the 7th European conference on speech communication and technology (Eurospeech), pp 1367–1370 391
392
- Nivre J (2000) Gothenburg Transcription Standard (GTS). University of Gothenburg, Department of Linguistics 393
394
- Nivre J (2004) Modified Standard Orthography (MSO). University of Gothenburg, Department of Linguistics 395
396
- Noll D (2000) Conflict dynamics. Los Angeles Daily Journal Verdicts and Settlements. 20 Oct 2000 397
398