

The author's conclusion is that there is no difference between self-defence and bullying. The author considers the criteria for bullying — namely the intention to harm another individual, and the motivation to exert one's power — before using a case of a 10-year-old punching his senior to demonstrate how ostensible acts of self-defence also fulfil both of these criteria jointly justifying his conclusion. Overall, I do not accept his conclusion.

First, the author argues that acts of self-defence also exhibit the intention to harm another, making them acts of bullying as well. This argument, however, fallaciously assumes that individuals intend every outcome of their actions — while it is true that the direct outcome of a punch might be that the other individual is hurt, it does not mean that the individual who punched the other intended to cause that harm. Often, someone acting in a position of self-defence might not intend to cause that harm — they might be motivated by an extreme sense of fear that clouded their rationality, or they might let out that punch because of an instinctive “fight” response in response to perceived danger. As such, it is not true that acts of self-defence are necessarily intended by those who commit them to cause harm to others, since they might be involuntary emotional or instinctive reactions.

Second, the author argues that self-defence is also motivated by the same desire to exert power over another as acts of bullying others does. This is also not necessarily true: there is a difference between asserting power and control and preventing others from asserting power and control over you. For instance, while a child might kick and punch at his kidnapper in order to free himself and stop himself from getting abducted, it would be unreasonable to say he intends to “assert control” over the kidnapper — once he is free, he would most likely not choose to continue kick and punching the kidnapper to assert power over him. Hence, this criterion for bullying is also not necessarily fulfilled by acts of self-defence.

At this point, it is clear that the author's conclusion cannot be justified, since neither of the two premises that jointly justify his conclusion are true. However, the implicit

premise — that there are only two criteria for bullying — is also not necessarily true: for instance, self-defence might be distinguished from bullying by the fact that it is done in a desperate situation of last resort. We would intuitively say, for instance, that someone kicking a stranger on the street would be a bully, but a woman kicking someone attempting to sexually assault her could not be called a bully, since her action is done as a last resort. As such, the author's two criteria may not be exhaustive — we might need to specify that an act of bullying is a needless one, a criteria that the author fails to consider.

As such, the author's argument is weak.

AO2: 8/10    AO3: 5/5    Total: 13/15

### **Examiner's Comments**

*Good reconstruction and evaluation that considers and weighs different intentions.  
Clear reasoning.*