

# Aggression: Definition, Subject Field, Attributions and Instrumental Research Axes

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## Abstract

The article focuses on exploring the essence of the term “aggression,” encompassing a broad semantic field with varying levels and spheres, as well as diverse phenomena. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding and reinterpretation, positioning it as a subject for socio-philosophical, sociological, socio-psychological, and criminological research. The primary goal of the article is to precisely delineate the subject scope and semantic breadth of the “aggression” concept, as well as to identify its key characteristics and instrumental axes relevant to applied research.

Methodologically, the research employs a critical analysis approach within a multidisciplinary and multi-paradigm framework aimed at finding a shared foundation. This shared element aims not only to define the attributions associated with the “aggression” concept but also to offer an applied instrumental framework for future research and analysis of prior studies. The study’s methodology involves a comprehensive examination of the subject domain through a multi-paradigm and interdisciplinary approach to discern a shared foundation (“common denominator”). This shared element not only facilitates the delineation of the defining aspects of the “aggression” concept but also serves as a practical tool for forthcoming research endeavors and the analysis of previously conducted studies.

Through this exploration, the writer has uncovered the subject domain, primary characteristics, and instrumental aspects, enabling the formation of our distinctive operational interpretation of “aggression” as we seek to uncover a shared common denominator that underlies various manifestations and their conceptualizations. Hence, aggression can be understood as a activism directed towards destruction, characterized by impulsive temporal tendencies and an expansionist spatial nature, with an attacking and forceful disposition.

## Keywords

definition, categorical series and context, aggression, destruction, impulsiveness, expansion, strength

## Introduction

The principal instrumental aspects of aggression encompass: (a) In the attribution of activism: behavior-activity; spontaneity-rationality; (b) relating to the attribution of destruction: destruction-creation; damage-increase; harm-benefit; reversibility-irreversibility; deprivation-acquisition; (c) in the spatial attribution of expansion: attack-defense; justice-injustice; expansion-contraction; inter-level dynamics and correlations; (d) concerning temporal attribution of impulsiveness: impulse-stability; discontinuity-sequence; and (e) encompassing attribution of strength: strength-fragility; hostility-friendliness; intolerance-tolerance; decisiveness-indecisiveness; control-uncontrollability. These instrumental aspects establish the functional framework for exploring the phenomenon of aggression, a subject we intend to elucidate in future investigations.

Aggression, with its extensive semantic scope, diverse levels and domains, encompassing various phenomena, situational aspects, material (physical), spiritual (ideas, images, representations, etc.), psychological factors, and more recently, virtual and network manifestations, as well as attributes of benevolence and malignancy, demands comprehensive understanding and reinterpretation within the realms of socio-philosophical, sociological, socio-psychological, and criminological research. The problem under consideration reflects the general discourse of current social-behavioral research (Castillo-Eito et al., 2020; Chester & West, 2020; Cruz et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2020; Yang, 2020). Especially in the field of social media, which acts as a representative research environment (Kim et al., 2020; Lapierre & Dane, 2020; McCreery & Krach, 2018; Oksanen et al., 2020; Sparby, 2017).

Human beings encounter an array of aggression manifestations (Böhm et al., 2016; Denzley & Peterson, 2018; Lansford, 2018; Weick, 2020). Here are 10 illustrative examples:

1. A woman of middle age boards a crowded minibus and, in response to the driver's request to make room for standing passengers, retorts loudly, "You'll take me anyway. And that young lady over there will yield her seat to me."
2. A schoolboy gains access to a firearm stored at home and proceeds to open fire on fellow classmates and teachers within the school premises.
3. In kindergarten, a child reprimands a doll by placing it in a corner during playtime.
4. Between April 6 and July 18, 1994, a massacre of Rwandan Tutsis by another ethnic group, the Hutus, unfolded (Straus, 2006). This violent event was instigated by government directives following the introduction of an "ethnicity" column in passports. The tragedy was further fueled by the nationalistic rhetoric broadcasted by "Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills". Accounts from participants in these events depict victims being predominantly killed with crude weapons like rusty knives or, less commonly, firearms. The total toll from this genocide reached 20% of the country's population.
5. In the midst of a drunken altercation, one of the arguing companions fatally wounds his friend using a kitchen knife.
6. An abandoned newborn is discovered inside a dumpster, prompting a search by authorities for the mother responsible.
7. In Nice, a terrorist perpetrates a knife attack at Basilica of Notre-Dame, resulting in the deaths of three individuals and injuries to several parishioners (Sandford, 2020). The attacker has been apprehended, with witnesses reporting hearing shouts of "Allahu Akbar!" at the scene. Subsequent incidents, including attempted attacks in Avignon and Lyon, were also reported. In Avignon, a knife-wielding perpetrator threatened passersby and attempted to attack law enforcement before being fatally shot. In Lyon, a man was detained while brandishing a large knife at a streetcar stop. There were no casualties. Another incident occurred outside France, near the French consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where a man armed with a short blade wounded a security guard before being taken into custody.

8. Following a dispute concerning the company's growth strategy, the CEO resigns from the corporation and establishes a prosperous new venture.
9. Sergei Korolev, a prominent Soviet scientist and designer of rocket and space systems, played a pivotal role in the development of Soviet space technology. As Chairman of the USSR Council of Chief Designers, he oversaw the successful launch of the first artificial Earth satellite. He was the one who sent the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, into space. He was a two-time Hero of Socialist Labor and a recipient of the Lenin Prize. In 1938, he faced accusations under Article 58, encompassing two specific paragraphs: 58-7, which pertained to "Subversion of state industry... carried out for counter-revolutionary intentions using state institutions, enterprises, or opposing their standard functioning," and 58-11, which concerned "Any form of organizational activity with the intent of planning or executing the crimes outlined in this section..." (Rebrov, 2001).

Korolev was alleged to have engaged in illicit activities aimed at sabotaging the progress and supply of new weaponry to the Red Army since 1935. Throughout interrogations, he was subjected to physical abuse, including beatings that resulted in a broken jaw (French & Burgess, 2007). Numerous revelations emerged subsequent to his apprehension within the confines of the "sharazhka," a confidential Construction Office. In the aftermath, Sergei Pavlovich frequently uttered his favored phrase: "They will strike without a eulogy." Numerous breakthroughs emerged subsequent to his apprehension within the confines of the secretive "sharazhka," the classified Construction Office. Subsequently, Sergei Korolev frequently reiterated his favored expression: "They will whack one without even an obituary."

10. Here is an excerpt from Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem "What is Good and What is Bad":

If a lousy bully / beats up / a weak little kid... / this sort of thing / I / in this book / don't even want / to put.

This one here, yells: / 'Hands off those / who are smaller / than you!'

This boy / is so good, / it's simply a lovely sight.

If you've torn up / a book / and then / a ball, / as the children say: / 'Bad boy!'

If a boy / loves hard work, / and pokes / his little finger / in a book, / let it be written / about him here: / He's / a good boy. [...]

From the crow / this cry-baby / went running. / He's simply / a coward. / This / is very bad. [...]

This one, / though himself a baby, / with the dreadful bird / argues. / A brave / boy / is good, / in life it'll come in / handy (Mayakovsky, 1967).

All these instances span different domains and involve diverse subjects, each with their own motivations, situational details, degrees of social endorsement, and consequences. However, they all manifest a common phenomenon known as aggression. To comprehensively study and grasp the essence of aggression, it is imperative to establish a clear definition of the concept.

Heinz Heckhausen delved into the multifaceted and intricate nature of aggression, providing an extensive insight into its complexity. In everyday language, "aggression" encompasses a range of actions that violate the physical or psychological well-being of another individual or group, inflict material harm, obstruct the realization of their intentions, oppose their interests, or result in their harm (even destroy them). This broad antisocial connotation necessitates grouping under the same category such disparate phenomena as childhood disputes and warfare, reproach and murder, penalty and criminal assault. Similar to other social motivations, individuals committing aggressive acts typically respond not merely to immediate situational aspects but are woven into a complex backstory of event evolution, prompting them to assess the intentions of others and the outcomes of their own actions. Since many (though not all) types of aggressive behaviors are subject to regulation by ethical norms and societal sanctions, the researcher must also account for a range of suppressed and covert forms of aggressive conduct (Heckhausen, 2010).

Expanding on his description of the intricate nature of studying the phenomenon of aggression, it is valuable to note that aggression isn't solely confined to actual scenarios but is also portrayed in literary works, feature and documentary films, communication within social networks, chat platforms, blogs, comics, music, and even animated productions. The complexity and diversity in the expression of aggression, along with its importance for the turbulent development of society, are currently being brought to the forefront in the study of this phenomenon. The exploration of various methods of conveying aggression necessitates a contemporary investigation and reevaluation of aggression within the context of present societal progress, and consequently, the concept of aggression.

The goal of the article is to precisely delineate the domain and semantic expanse of the "aggression" concept, its primary attributes, and instrumental dimensions that serve as tools for applied research. In alignment with the aim of our scholarly exploration, a methodology is adopted. The investigation is conducted by employing a critical analysis of the subject domain through a multi-paradigmatic and interdisciplinary quest for a "common denominator" – a shared element that not only aids in defining the attributes of the "aggression" concept but also possesses an applicable instrumental nature, intended for forthcoming research and the evaluation of already conducted studies.

## Methods

Aligned with the objectives of our scientific inquiry, the selected methodology is employed. The research unfolds through a critical analysis of the subject field, adopting a multi-paradigmatic and interdisciplinary approach to discover a "common denominator." This common ground not only facilitates the delineation of the attributes of the concept of "aggression" but also possesses an applied instrumental character for future research and the analysis of previously conducted studies.

The ongoing debate over the definition of the "aggression" concept remains unresolved due to several factors. Firstly, the concept's genetic code is explored to unravel its core content, origins, etymology, and its linguistic utilization. This includes the meanings it embodies, whether currently prevalent or archaic, and its significance in contemporary or outdated communication.

Secondly, defining the concept "aggression," like any other concept, involves demarcation and the establishment of semantic boundaries. This demarcation aims to distinguish the concept's scope, outlining what it entails and what it does not. Simultaneously, it sets the internal semantic volume of the concept, delineating the subject field. The emergence of novel manifestations and phenomena necessitates a reevaluation of previously explored facets.

Thirdly, the subject field, as part of the definition, establishes the semantic delimitation from other related concepts within the semantic series. For example, while aggression shares meaning with "crime," they overlap but aren't entirely synonymous. This topic is of interest to various scholars and experts (Ang et al., 2015; Halle et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2019; Simmons et al., 2019; You & Lim, 2015). It is important to note that aggression can be a precursor to accomplishment and may remain within legal confines. Although equivalent concepts at the same semantic level, they possess distinct yet somewhat divergent semantic scopes.

Fourthly, In any definition, there exist contextual concepts that form the conceptual context, contributing to the determination of the concept's content and scope. These contextual concepts, rather than delimiting, unveil the essence of the concept.

Fifth, the subject field's verification in the categorical series and categorical context is primarily conducted within practical sciences. Sociology, as one such discipline, unites categorization (engagement with the subject field), interpretation (clarification of concepts to uncover the subject field's meaning), and operationalization (identification of measurable elements in definitions) to elucidate their states and the relationships between them.

Sixth, the application of dialectics in relation to the concept's content is crucial due to the law of unity and struggle of opposites. This mandates the study of categories that reflect the essence of opposing phenomena, enabling the differentiation of content and measurement, qualitative value, the absence of which results in the emergence of the opposite phenomenon.

Seventh, a definition should be practical and concise, adhering to Occam's razor principle, while also serving as a "common denominator" for various species definitions. This means it should encompass the specific manifestations of aggression across different spheres (such as social, economic, political, cultural, military, and technological) or domains and levels. The definition should encompass an essential commonality - the very "common denominator" - alongside specific attributes unique to the particular sphere, domain, or level.

## Results

The application of the methodology in the pursuit of universality involves the exploration of laws and regularities within the "house of being," as per Heidegger's concept. Consequently, the outcome of this methodological application is the quest for fundamental, stable, recurrent, internal, objective, and necessary connections among objects, processes, and phenomena—a quest encapsulated in the concept of a scientific law.

This result directs the logical categorical analysis toward the universal, the "common denominator," encompassing etymology, definition, demarcation from other concepts, categorical and conceptual contexts, the subject's meaning field, and the dialectical unity and struggle with opposites. It also involves the search for their measure and qualitative certainty. Applying this methodology to the concept of aggression enables the consideration of the universal essential character underlying the diverse phenomena encompassed by this concept.

The paramount outcome lies in a systematic approach to concept interpretation, involving the delineation of independent and dependent variables, succeeded by operationalization. In this process, the essential attributes mirror the acquired pattern inherent in practical activity—constituting the scientific principle of the research. The examination of this principle, as a result of the research, is conducted through the essential attributions. When applied in practical analysis, these attributions are identified as the "instrumental axes" of aggression research, representing the dominant concepts in major aggression theories.

## Discussion

Equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the concept's content, let us delve into the definition of "aggression." Initially, exploring the etymology of the term "aggression", scholars examining the semantic nuances of the concept, such as A.A. Karavanov and I.Y. Ustinov, propose that the word "aggression" finds its roots in Latin - "aggre<sup>o</sup>di<sup>o</sup>" (more commonly "aggre<sup>o</sup>di<sup>o</sup>r"). This term is a fusion of "ag" (which, prior to repeating the letter "g," is akin to "ad" in Latin) and "gre<sup>o</sup>di<sup>o</sup>r" (meaning "step"). "Ag" in the first person functions as a preposition indicating aspects like space, time, number, purpose, orientation, or similarity, while in the second person, it acts as a prefix signifying orientation, initiation, addition, or accession. "Gredior" means "step." The literal sense of "aggre<sup>o</sup>di<sup>o</sup>r" implies "to proceed", "to move towards." In its original meaning, the phrase "to be aggressive" denoted "to move towards a goal" (T. Maccius Plautus, c. 254-184 BC). Later, the Latin term "aggre<sup>o</sup>si<sup>o</sup>" (derived from the participle "aggre<sup>o</sup>si<sup>u</sup>s" - to proceed or attack) came to signify "to attack" (Aurelius Augustinus, 354-430 AD). The French dictionary *Le Grand Robert* defines "aggression" (Fr. *agression*) as "an attack involving the use of force," while "aggre<sup>o</sup>si<sup>o</sup>f (-ve)" is interpreted as "offensive" or "defiant." The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines aggression as a result of feelings of anger or antipathy that lead to a hostile attack; an unprovoked attack (Karavanov & Ustinov, 2014).

In its original etymological sense, aggression is depicted in a largely positive light - as an act of offense, fearlessness in moving forward, and stepping ahead. The shift from a civilization centered on forceful protection and direction, along with the sacralization of power and strength, to one emphasizing humanism and the safeguarding of human rights, gradually transformed the connotation of aggression from positive to negative. This evolution is deserving of acknowledgment in contemporary dictionaries. Psychologist A. Nalchajyan also draws attention to this point, referencing the etymology of aggression in a footnote. He points out that the term 'aggression' stems from the Latin root 'aggredi - ad gredi,' wherein 'grades' means 'step,' and 'ad' signifies 'to.' Consequently, the core meaning of 'aggression' pertains to moving forward towards a specific goal, unfalteringly, devoid of doubt or fear. In parallel, 'regression' - deriving from 'ge' (back) and 'grades' (step) - signifies retreating or moving back" (Nalchajyan, 2007).

These phenomena are not coincidental; they highlight the primary and secondary interpretations of aggression. The secondary connotations encompass an extensive realm of aggression, not solely in terms of deviation, but also concerning delinquency, the criminal divergence of behavior. In this context, it is intriguing to consider the etymology of "aggression" in other cultures, as explored by Karavanov and Ustinov (2014).

"In Chinese, the term 'aggression' (Chinese 侵略) harbors approximately eight connotations, depending on the context of application ( 侵略集团, 侵略政策, 侵略战争 etc). These connotations encompass concepts and phrases such as 'rupture of economic relations,' 'confiscation of bureaucratic capital and transfer of landlord's land to peasants,' 'implementation of actions in all directions,' 'unfolding in all directions,' 'total war,' 'invading, occupying, encroaching on another's territory,' 'criminal attack, violation, counterfeiting,' and 'unprovoked attack.' Similarly, the interpretations of aggression (Japanese 侵略) in Japanese linguistic culture are similarly multifaceted: 攻略 - signifying 'to seize,' 'to take by storm,' 'to occupy' (in the sense of capturing a position or city); 侵略战争 - denoting 'invading war,' 'invasion,' and more. In Arabic, aggression is linked with 'committing an act against one's will.' Based on the meaning conveyed by these connotations, it can be inferred that in contemporary foreign languages, the concept of 'aggression' is employed in a sense that is closely aligned with, though not identical to, its original meaning. This variance stems from the diversity of manifestations of this phenomenon, which is reflected in the perceptions of individuals participating in various interactions, spanning interpersonal interactions to interactions within social groups" (Karavanov & Ustinov, 2014).

Considering the societal nature of aggressive interactions and the connotations associated with its signifier, it becomes apparent that the meanings of aggression from the perspectives of war, crime, and violence closely intertwine, encompassing a wide spectrum of frequency and manifestation. In essence, these authors discern fundamental predicates and psychological patterns within the concept of "aggression" that aid in distinguishing it from related concepts. These predicates and patterns encompass intense activism, the pursuit of self-assertion, leadership, power, the inclination to subjugate others or possess objects, the appropriation and forceful mastery of material or abstract entities (including control over other individuals), hostility, attack, damage, destruction, and more (Karavanov & Ustinov, 2014). These attributes and patterns, rather than offering definitive definitions, effectively delineate the sphere of aggression. This complexity is unsurprising, given the intricate nature of aggression as a subject of study.

Erich Fromm (1973) delineates his methodological framework concerning "aggression" as follows: "In this book I have used the term "aggression" for defensive, reactive aggression that I have subsumed under "benign aggression," but call "destructiveness" and "cruelty" the specifically human propensity to destroy and to crave for absolute control ("malignant aggression"). Whenever I have used "aggression" because it seemed useful in a certain context other than in the sense of defensive aggression, I have qualified it, to avoid misunderstanding"

(p. 15). We concur with the standpoint that exploring both benign and malignant aggression is essential. Moreover, we believe that from the perspective of aggression, both types possess an inherent destructiveness, with benign destructiveness safeguarding and nurturing life (biophilia) and malignant destructiveness culminating in cruelty and necrophilia.

Among various definitions, one of the broadest is proposed by Bass in his 1961 work. For Bass, aggression encompasses any behavior that poses a threat or inflicts harm upon others. Another classic definition is attributed to Robert Baron and Deborah Richardson, who describe aggression as any form of behavior aimed at causing harm to another living being who does not desire such treatment (Baron & Richardson, 1993).

A. Nalchajyan critiques Baron R.'s definition, particularly its reliance on the notion of "unwillingness for such treatment," as the very desire for such treatment already justifies it. In response, Nalchajyan offers an alternative interpretation, stating that aggression entails a distinct behavior demonstrated by both humans and animals. This behavior is targeted at other entities with the purpose of causing them harm (Nalchajyan, 2007).

Aggression is understood as human behavior intended to threaten or cause harm to other entities. To effectively delineate and understand the semantic scope of the concept, it is essential to differentiate between contemporary concepts and etymology, which involves advancing towards danger. Even here, the definition underscores the infliction of harm or damage. Aggression is not always harmful; it frequently holds a contrasting aspect, benefiting situations such as when aggression is lawful, halts atrocities, or safeguards the greater good. Nonetheless, aggressive behavior remains active. Behavior possesses a distinct context setting it apart from mere activity. Behavior is viewed from the perspective of the unconscious, irrational, spontaneous, and biological, whereas activity is characterized by its central attribute – goal orientation, which is rational, consistent, conscious, and societal. When discussing "aggression" concerning individuals, one can discern manifestations of animalistic and biological aggression – reflexive and instinctive, often unconscious. Simultaneously, the concept of "aggression" encompasses goal-oriented activity, entailing territorial expansion through space and time, often possessing significant societal implications. It is noteworthy that the term "aggression" gained prominence in 1795 during the unfolding of the "Napoleonic Wars," originating from the French language. Subsequently, it saw active utilization, primarily in politics and psychology, between 1911 and 1913 on the cusp of the First World War.

Thus, when dealing with aggression, a concept is needed that embraces both behavior and activity. On this matter, we are in concurrence with Erich Fromm regarding the biosocial essence of aggression and human destructiveness. Fromm, while positively assessing C. Lorenz's work on aggression, highlighted how the Austrian ethologist managed to underscore the positive and natural significance of aggression as a biological behavior. However, the direct application of this meaning to the social sphere proved less successful for Lorenz. In alignment with Fromm's stance on the biosocial essence of both humanity and the phenomenon of aggression, we propose our interpretation of the essence of aggression. In our view, the most fitting term is "activism," as its semantic realm encompasses both "behavior" and "activity." It is noteworthy that activism encompasses both biological and sociocultural behavior – encompassing unconscious, spontaneous conduct influenced by social and cultural norms, values, rules, and sanctions – as well as the actions that accompany it.

Hence, the first core attribute of aggression is "activism," situated within a categorical context that encompasses both biological and social behavior, as well as activity. This contextual framework does not run counter to the etymological notion of "stepping forward," "rushing ahead," "attacking," and the like. Introducing "activism" into the definition of aggression necessitates an immediate exploration of the classification into active and passive forms. As activism cannot inherently be passive, it can instead be categorized as either displayed or non-displayed, intensely or minimally expressed, concealed or overt, internal or external, and so on.

Positioning aggression as activism within the definition encompasses not only the outwardly expressed elements but also encompasses the processes of its restraint, suppression of its manifestation, displacement, and the phenomenon of suppressed aggression. It is noteworthy that this inclusion of "activism" implies not just its external aspect but also the internal processes associated with its control and concealment.

Turning to the next attributive aspect of aggression – "infliction of damage" – prompts a query about its generality. With the inclusion of "infliction of damage," the definition of aggression becomes primarily geared towards the study of criminal aggression – one specific form of aggression. However, even within criminal aggression, there exists the potential for the inverse process – the criminal appropriation of another's property or illicit enrichment. In other words, damage inflicted on the victim of aggression can simultaneously translate into gain for the aggressor. This scenario can lead to absurd conclusions since activity, as a species-specific trait of humanity, involves the transformation of the environment and the world around, thus equating it with aggression. This, however, is an oversimplification as human activity also encompasses profoundly positive forms such as creativity, which is a defining human attribute.

Furthermore, aggression can manifest as a means of restoring justice or eliminating injustice, where the primary focus lies in the activity rather than the harm inflicted. This scenario delves into the discourse on human and humanistic values, and how these values define the measure of human aggression. In Konrad Lorenz's work, aggression is depicted as an instinct serving the protection and survival of an organism (a positive attribute of aggression) or the destruction of life (a negative attribute), while also acting as an instinct for organizing individuals within a species' spatial realm. The concept of aggression as "infliction of damage" fails to encompass the entirety of the phenomenon, even though the dichotomy of damage-increment is a significant instrumental pair for exploring the magnitude of aggression. However, placing "increment" as the opposition to "damage" (with its economic manifestation being "profit") at the heart of aggression raises questions. Can "increment" be the central focus of aggression? This could certainly be the case in situations of competition, war, and bilateral or multilateral aggression. In the spatial context of human distribution – spanning physical and biological spaces, as well as social, political, and other realms – aggression gives rise to expansion, which inevitably leads to its opposite process – contraction or spatial reduction.

The expansion-contraction axis stands as another pivotal instrumental dichotomy within aggression. However, we contend that the concept "destruction," emerging from psychoanalytic theory, is more fitting as an attributive within the categorical context. In Freud's theory's second phase of development, Eros and Thanatos instincts were deemed fundamental – the former symbolizing the pursuit of love and life, and the latter encapsulating the drive for destruction and death. Thanatos found clarification in the concepts of "mortido" and "destrudo." Sabina Spielrein (1994) initially explored "destruction" as "becoming stems from destruction." Subsequently, Freud's followers Paul Federn and Eduardo Weiss asserted the presence of an autonomous energy source within the death instinct, labeling it "mortido" (Federn) or "destrudo" (Weiss). Federn, following his mentor's concept, coined the term "mortido," highlighting three main forms of catexis – mental processes related to self-preservation, libido, and destruction, subsequently referred to as "mortido" (Litvinov, 1996).

Erich Fromm's classic work "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness" offers comprehensive insights into destructiveness (Fromm, 1973). While the concept of destructiveness aligns with the instinctual nature of aggression, it is essential to acknowledge the foundational basis of aggression in activity. Aggression, when understood as "a movement towards" entities that jeopardize life and survival, signifies a deliberate intent to eliminate threats and dangers through targeted destruction. However, it is important to recognize that aggression easily transitions from acceptable to unacceptable, manifesting in both the elimination of obsolescence and the annihilation of life-preserving threats. This includes the practice of negative



social deviance, culminating in the extreme form of irreversible life destruction – death.

Viewed as an activism aimed at destruction, aggression's etymological meaning aligns with impulsivity, onset, offense, and attack. This encompasses not only the automatic “fight, flight, or freeze” response but also the mobilization of forces and the outward surge of destructive energy. While destructive energy can metamorphose into creative energy, the impulsiveness, surges, and force mobilization remain. At the biochemical level, this entails the release of adrenaline, and habitual repetition of such behaviors can lead to a state of adrenaline addiction.

Certainly, the impulsive nature of aggression, particularly in instinctive and automatic behaviors, has been extensively examined. However, insufficient attention has been directed towards understanding the impulsive and discrete aspects of aggressiveness within purposeful activities. Instances of aggressive criminal activities often give rise to a reliance on adrenaline. At times, this dependency on adrenaline becomes the basis for criminal behavior. Examples of this phenomenon can be observed in the learning processes within aggressive subcultures, as depicted in both versions of the movie “Point Break” (Bigelow, 1991; Core, 2015). The impulsive character of aggression is undoubtedly present, as evidenced by the cluster of aggressive emotions including irritation, resentment, anger, rage, and hatred.

The impulsive nature of aggression is attributive for several reasons. Firstly, the impulse for destruction (whether through causing pain, damage, harm, or through communicative actions such as insults, hate speech, and their psycholinguistic effects) cannot be sustained indefinitely; it operates discretely, dependent on the duration of the underlying “impulse fuel.” This impulse towards destruction is driven by goal-oriented activities aimed at satisfying unconscious urges for aggression. Consequently, it gives rise to secondary aggression, which is often pre-meditated and rationalized, concealing the primary aggressive instinct. Secondly, deliberate planning of destructive actions represents the “taming” of aggression, sometimes in socially endorsed or tolerated forms, and sometimes in socially condemned ones.

Thirdly, the duration of aggression itself is marked by discreteness (discontinuity) due to variations in intensity, periodicity, and the recurrence of aggressive impulses. With repeated practice, this impulse can evolve into a subjective “thirst” or an interest, such as the interest in sports like soccer or boxing. Different definitions associate activism and impulsiveness, attack and hostility, with force and violence, implying resistance and opposition to suppression. This component of aggression, involving force and confrontation, has an attributive quality that opposes powerlessness. However, when its boundaries are breached, it transforms into criminal acts and manifests in hateful forms of aggression. The concept of power, when lacking qualitative precision, can become illusory in its expressions of control and uncontrollability. These illusory manifestations often stand against genuine forms of management, decision-making, determination, and the ability to achieve objectives.

## Conclusions

Hence, aggression can be defined as an impulsive and discrete activism directed towards destruction, with an expansionist character that involves forceful attacks in space.

### *The primary instrumental axes of aggression are as follows*

1. In the attribution of activity:
  - behavior (reflexes and instincts in biological behavior, patterns, archetypes, and prototypes in sociocultural behavior);
  - activity (goal-oriented actions and rationalized behavior for achieving results);
  - spontaneity-rationality.

2. Attribution of destruction:
  - destruction-creation;
  - damage-increase;
  - harm-benefit;
  - reversibility-irreversibility;
  - deprivation-acquisition.
3. In the spatial attribution of expansion:
  - attack-defense;
  - justice-injustice;
  - expansion-contraction;
  - interlevel and level nature, serving as a contrast of magnitudes, relates to the interpretation across different dimensions, encompassing the individual scope (including interactions between individuals), collective context (within groups and communities), public domain, international sphere (ranging from local to global), and the correlations existing among these various tiers.
4. In the temporal attribution of impulsiveness:
  - impulse-stability;
  - discontinuity-sequence.
5. Attribution of strength:
  - strength-fragility;
  - hostility-friendliness;
  - intolerance-tolerance;
  - decisiveness-indecisiveness;
  - control-uncontrollability.

We believe that these instrumental axes establish the functional framework for studying the phenomenon of aggression, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent research. Equally important, in our perspective, is the exploration of cognitive, emotional, and connate-actor manifestations of aggression. This includes studying images and representations of aggression in the cognitive dimension, the role of archetypes and prototypes, images that are reflected in the concept of types, and presentations where the functioning of images is influenced by memory, in the emotional expression explored within the study of aggressive emotions, and in connative displays encompassing patterns, stereotypes, and frameworks of aggressive conduct, as well as the practical enactment of aggressive activity by individuals.

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