A CRITICAL STUDY OF INFORMAL FALLACIES IN SOME SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN GHANA

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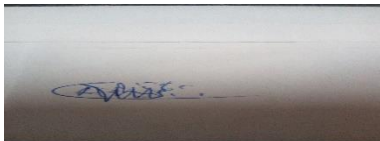
A CRITICAL STUDY OF INFORMAL FALLACIES IN SOME SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN GHANA

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To my late mother, Agnes Obo and my late mother-in-law, Elizabeth Agyapong

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

The research undertakes a critical study of informal fallacies in some socio-political and religious discourses in Ghana. It clearly and aptly demonstrates that the aforementioned discourses are mostly, if not, always laced with fallacies which obscure and distort clear and critical thinking. The study shows that language, which is the fundamental means by which to engage in socio-political discourse, can be viewed as a complicated tool which is open to misuse and abuse. It shows that language used in socio-political discourses is more often than not utilized poorly, and as such assertions and appeals can be confused with factual/logical inaccuracies. Statements can be formulated in ways that make their content dangerously vague, ambiguous or generally misleading.

The research shows that although fallacies can be committed intentionally or unintentionally, in discourses in general, they are mostly, if not always, committed intentionally in socio-political discourse so as to achieve political gains and agenda. Another area of discourse that is tackled in this work where fallacies frequently occur is the religious sector. The study notes that matters of religion are mostly matters that are delicate to handle as these matters are mostly, again if not always, based on faith. It is shown herein that many a time, religious personalities use fallacious as means to drive their religious agenda across.

The research then looks at what these aforementioned fallacies imply in relation to socio-political and religious discourses. It proceeds to discuss the positive implications of fallacies before it progresses to the negative implications of same. It then asks how a fallacy will be beneficial to a person and or how it will disadvantage the same person. If fallacies often occur in socio-political and religious discourses, then one must have the ability to detect these fallacies and try to avoid them. The work discusses how to detect fallacies and how to avoid them. It makes bold claims that if one has knowledge about fallacies then one will be able to avoid them.

KEY TERMS IN THE THESIS

Logic, Arguments, Fallacy, Formal and Informal fallacies, Socio-political discourse, Political argumentation, Political persuasion, Religion, Fideism, Prophet, Prophetic ministry

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General Introduction

… arguments, like men, are often pretenders – Plato.

It would be a very good thing if every trick could receive some short and obviously appropriate name, so that when anyone use this or that particular trick, they could at once be reproved for it – Arthur Schopenhauer.

Background of the study

From Aristotle's time till today, the creative aspects of logic (what may be termed informal logic, where informal fallacies feature prominently) and their connections with or to natural language have been greatly overpowered and supplanted by formal characterization of the subject. Informal Fallacies are pitfalls into which any of us may stumble and misstep in our reasoning. In our day-to-day interactions with others as humans, we mostly commit fallacies - knowingly or unknowingly - in our quest to argue and reason logically. It shall be seen in this research that fallacies have become inseparable with our everyday socio-political discourse.

Since fallacies may be tools used for propaganda, Ghanaian politicians and social commentators deliberately or ignorantly deploy some of them to aid their arguments. It must be noted that some of these politicians and social commentators are well educated and aware of such fallacies. Even so, they overlook the implications of using such fallacies in their arguments. I will argue that the reason for this is that politicians and social commentators either take the majority of Ghanaians as people who are unaware and hence ignorant of such fallacies, or they consider such fallacies as acceptable discourses in Ghanaian socio-political life. It is in such vein as trying to mislead your audience either wittingly or unwittingly that this research problematizes informal fallacies. This study problematizes informal fallacies for the following reasons, among others:

1. Fallacies lead to the problem of bias in political argumentations.
2. Fallacies lead to the problem of bias in social argumentations and commentary.
3. Fallacies make negative propaganda enticing, especially to audience who do not have the necessary tools to assess what socio-political commentators proffer
4. Political and social commentators use fallacies as red herring and or smoke screen to deceive their audience.

Research problem, rationale, significance and purpose

In my observation, the available literature, does not seem to do a painstaking analysis of fallacies involved in socio-political speeches. It is this lack of pointing out fallacies in socio-political speeches and of showing the implications that these fallacies have on readers or listeners that my research seeks to draw the readers' and listeners' attention to. It is the researcher's informed observation, which further corroborates Hamblin (1970: 10) that there has never yet been a book exclusively on fallacies, that is, a book-length study of the subject as a whole, or of incorrect reasoning in its own right rather than as an afterthought or adjunct to something else.

This research seeks to bring to the attention of listeners and readers the need to be very careful and attentive to what politicians, religious leaders and social commentators say or write so that they (audience) are not carried away by what they hear and read. The research calls for a proper critical scrutiny of claims and arguments made by the above leaders of society.

The research seeks to reveal a family of inconsistency and propaganda inherent in political speeches and social commentaries in, especially, Ghana. These inconsistencies and propaganda have indelible consequences on the audience and readers. I maintain that by bringing the audience and reader close to acknowledging these fallacies, it will help them to make informed choices on social, religious and political issues that affect them in everyday life.

Attempts to persuade us – to believe something, to do something, to buy something – are everywhere. How can we learn to think critically about such attempts and to distinguish those that actually provide us with good reasons for being persuaded? How to spot fallacies in arguments and tell good reasoning from bad ones are key to assessing every discourse. We are frequently confronted with persuasions, through discourses – to influence our beliefs and actions – by giving us reasons to believe this or that, or to act in this way or that way. This work attempts to equip the reader with concepts and techniques used in the identification, analysis and assessment of socio-political discourses. The aim, here, is to improve the ability of the reader to tell whether a logical discourse is being given, exactly what the discourse is and whether one ought to be persuaded by it (the discourse). In every discourse in general and socio-political discourse in particular, language is very important as it is indeed the tool for discourse.

This work gives a detailed discussion of various ways in which language can obscure an arguer's intended meaning, through the use of rhetorical ploys and common species of informal fallacies. It affirms what Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, that "everything that can be said, must be said clearly" (Wittgenstein 2008:32). This work helps the reader to understand the importance of precise thinking in daily life, which was also echoed by Socrates in one of Plato's dialogues, the *Theaetetus* that "No tedious and irrelevant discussion can be allowed; what is said should be pertinent" (Burnyeat 1990:28).

The aim of this research is to stimulate and provoke readers to think deeply about social and political speeches before accepting the claims of such speeches. Stated differently, this research looks at how to help bring to the attention of all the need to learn to distinguish good from bad arguments and so become effective in arguments and oratory in our day-to-day socio-political interactions.

The research will, unflaggingly, provide a new dimension to the application of fallacies to everyday socio-political situations. Accordingly, the research will help reduce levels of deception and gullibility on the part of those who are at the receiving end of socio-political discourses that are laced and infested with fallacies.

Research methodology

This research uses the analytical research[1] methodology in analyzing sources. This is interspersed with the critical theory method where I critique by deconstructing and then reconstructing some socio-political commentaries in Ghana. The research further uses the hermeneutic method where I interpret and reinterpret the socio-political experiences of the people of Ghana. This is a qualitative research. The qualitative method is the most appropriate for this research because it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. It is used to uncover trends in thought and opinions and can delve deeper into research problems. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations. In this case, the political and social commentaries by commentators in Ghana will be the focal point.

Scheme of work

The study is undertaken in seven chapters as follows:

General Introduction: This is an introductory chapter. It deals with such elements as: background of the study, research problem and purpose of the study, research methodology, chapter breakdown and the intended original contribution (significance) to the field of investigation – that is, logic in particular and philosophy in general.

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[1] Analytical research is a specific type of research that involves critical thinking skills and the evaluation of facts and information relative to the research being conducted.

Chapter one: Pre-text of Informal Fallacies: Ghana's current socio-political environment. The chapter looks at the nation Ghana and the socio-political and religious environment currently at play.

Chapter two: Context of Informal Fallacies: This chapter discusses in general ubiquitous informal fallacies mostly used in socio-political and religious discourses.

Chapter three: Common Informal fallacies in political discourses. This chapter focuses on informal fallacies that appear in political communications or speeches in Ghana. This will provide information needed to understand these informal fallacies so that when they are being applied to political speeches made by political commentators, readers will not find it difficult to comprehend.

Chapter four: Common Informal Fallacies in Religious Discourses. This chapter discusses informal fallacies that appear in social commentaries by religious leaders, social commentators, opinion leaders, policy makers and or policy analysts in Ghana. The fallacies here will concentrate more on religious commentaries.

Chapter five: Possible Implications of fallacies in socio-political discourse. This chapter demonstrates possible implications of fallacies in socio-political discourse, how to avoid fallacies in socio-political discourse and recommendations on the use of fallacies in socio-political discourse. This will not only help readers to be very careful with what they accept as credible but will also help them to know that when they are not very careful with accepting socio-political speeches wholesale, they mostly could be misled.

General conclusion: This chapter concludes the entire work. It also makes recommendations.

References: This section provides references of works used in the research.

Detailed chapter breakdown

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9. False dilemma or dichotomy

10. Red herring and or smoke screen

11. Begging the question

12. Appeal to irrelevant or unqualified authority

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1. Appeal to ignorance

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V.   Chapter 4: Common Informal Fallacies in Religious Discourses
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Chapter One

Pre-text of Informal Fallacies: Ghana's current socio-political environment

1.1 Introduction

Fallacies are unsound arguments based on faulty reasoning and are committed by human beings who inhabit geo-political spaces. Fallacies blare the soundness of arguments and make them fuzzy and jejune. In many ways, perpetrators of fallacies are to language what magicians are to vision. Both create illusion of what is correct. For the most part, however, a person is not taken in by the tricks of the magician. The magician is on stage and clearly set apart from those watching. The audience waits for the tricks, is entertained by them, and perhaps even attempts to figure out how they are done. Fallacies are verbal illusions, but they are not set apart from what is taken as correct. Nor are they woven into arguments to entertain. Rather, they are often used to persuade when there is insufficient evidence on which to establish a claim. While the tricks of the magician are/may be taken for what they are, this is seldom the case with instances of fallacies (Harrison III 1992:480). The soundness or otherwise of an argument depends largely on how the rules of logic are used or abused. Logical and critical reasoning require that we follow the rules of logic putatively. In this study I examine informal fallacies that are committed by people who inhabit the geo-political space of Ghana, west of Africa. It is my contention that reasoning is not simply a mental activity that is undertaken in *utopia.* Reasoning is shaped and influenced by the socio-political milieu that one finds oneself in. Such a milieu is a necessary 'pre-text.' The objective of this chapter is therefore to give a brief description of the socio-political environment of Ghana.

1.2 Ghana – meeting place for Africans

In socio-economic terms, both ancient Ghana (Ghana before independence in 1957) and modern Ghana (Ghana after independence in 1957) are famous for their wealth in gold and vibrant commercial activities. Ancient Ghana's socio-economic prosperity attracted many people, including merchants and scholars, from near and far into the cities and towns of the empire. During the colonial period, particularly after the Second World War, Ghana was also more advanced economically and socially than any other black African country. Already by 1945, Ghana had sizeable Western-educated elite of teachers, lawyers and businessmen. Education in Ghana prior to 1945 was mainly informal, based on home training. In 2000, Ghana's literacy rate based on people who could read and write, but not necessarily to do critical thinking was about 61.5% (Gocking 2005:32). Modern Ghana's (Ghana after independence, contemporary Ghana or Ghana today) economic wealth attracted merchants from other African and non-African territories. The leading members wanted the new Ghana to continue to play the role of serving as a centre of attraction, pulling many people into the country. On 5th March, 1957, at midnight, at a mass ceremony where the Union Jack was lowered and Ghana's flag raised, Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, made known this vision when he stated that: "It is our earnest hope that the Ghana which is now being reborn will be, like the Ghana of old, a centre to which all the peoples of Africa may come and where all the cultures of Africa may meet" (Buah 1980:3). From this, we gather that Nkrumah's ambition for Ghana after independence was to make Ghana truly independent, where Ghana will become the citadel of knowledge (Buah 1980:3). It is not surprising that when independence was announced the following day, 6th March, 1957, the main *agendum*

was to use Ghana's independence to unite the whole of Africa. Ordinarily, Democracy is defined as the system of government in which the people of a country are allowed to participate in decision making processes in the country with respect to political, social, religious, educational and economic spheres of life (Williams 1987:161). Modern Ghana since 1992 has practiced democracy, the fourth republican democracy, and for this reason, without fear, Ghanaians are privileged to share their views on issues affecting the country either positively or negatively. Freedom of the press enshrined in Ghana's 1992 constitution has enabled media houses in Ghana to report on various issues, being it political, or social, without any fear or intimidation. This chapter therefore, highlights the political and social situations in Ghana today, contemporary Ghana.

1.3 The social environment of Ghana today

1.3.1 Social stratification of Ghana

Ghana's social stratification system follows both pre-colonial and modern patterns. Most traditional kingdoms were divided into hereditary classes: royals, commoners and slaves. The royals maintained exclusive rights to fill the central offices of king and for Akan groups, queen mother. Incumbents acquired political and economic privileges, based on state control over foreign trade. Unlike European nobilities, however, special status was given only to office-holders and not their extended families, and no special monopoly over land was present (Kuada & Chacha 1999:33).

In contemporary Ghana, traditional royalties are still recognized but have been superseded by westernized elites. Contemporary stratification is based on education and

to a lesser degree, wealth, both of which have led to significant social mobility since independence. Marked wealth differences have also emerged, but have been moderated by extended family support obligations and the communal rights that most Ghanaians hold in land.

In traditional practice, kings and other hereditary officials marked their status through the use of regalia, such as umbrellas and staves, and the exclusive right to wear expensive clothing, such as kente cloth, and to consume and distribute special imported goods. In modern times, in this fourth republic, from 1992 to today, expenditure on Western consumer items has become the dominant status marker. Clothing, both expensive Western and traditional items, is an important symbol of education and wealth (https://www.ghanaweb.com. November 18, 2017).

1.3.2 Social situations in Ghana today

Christianity, Islam and Traditional African religions claim a roughly equal number of adherents. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the 1992 constitution, though Christianity tends to be the religion of the majority of the people in Ghana today. The seed of the Christian religion in the country was sown in the fifteenth century, but the permanent establishment of the churches on a nation-wide scale began from the second decade of the nineteenth century. Throughout that century, however progress was relatively slow. This was chiefly because of the high rate of deaths among the early European missionaries. Progress was slow because to the people, Christianity was a new religion whose demands were often at variance with some of the deep-rooted beliefs, practices and the traditional religions of the people (Kyeremateng 1999:9).

By 1980, about half of Ghana's population were on record as belonging to one or other of the Christian churches, although the nation could not be regarded as a Christian country, the churches were exercising remarkable influence on society. But while Christianity has brought to its followers and people undoubted benefits (enhanced moral behaviour, miracles, etc) it is equally true that it has eroded much of the people's ancestral customary practices, values and way of life – things this essay holds would have put them in both idols of the cave and idols of the tribe.

An innovation introduced by the Christian churches was marriage. The new religion refused to recognise marriage performed according to the people's own customary law and practices, and unless a couple married in the church as it was popularly described, that is according to the church's own ritual, they were denied important benefits such as the holy communion and Christian burial rites. Polygamy has been another source of conflict between the Churches' demands (doctrinal principles) and the indigenous society majority's principles of life, the traditional way of life (Mbiti 1970:181).

With the influence of Christianity, the vast majority of the people have abandoned many ancestral practices and beliefs: magic, divination, and taboos. In their efforts to promote the ideal of the equality of all men created in the image of the common father, God, the Christian missionaries played a leading role in ending the slave trade and slavery (Agbodeka 1970:45).

The Christian missions, apart from the above, did pioneering work in introducing new crafts and industries, scientific agriculture, mass literacy and formal education, modern health and other social services. Though the indigenous people had developed

rich forms of arts and crafts, it was the Christian missionaries who introduced modern industrial crafts such as carpentry, masonry, architecture, etc. as part of their educational programmes (Affrifah 2000:66).

Another great benefit to the people was health services which the early missionaries promoted. In the Ghanaian traditional society, most sick people depended for cure upon mystic and other unscientific methods of diagnosis, and although modern scientific research has confirmed the potency of concoctions of leaves, roots and the bark of trees, traditional African medical practice continued to be ignored. Firstly, preventive medicine consisted mainly in the use of talisman, magic rings and beads etc., and the observance of certain rituals and the prescription of taboos which in the light of modern medical science had no relevance whatever to the incidence of certain illness. Secondly, people often attributed natural ailment to supernatural causes and resorted to mystic cults to appease the unknown before applying medicine to the sick person. To provide healthy substitute for the questionable medical methods described above, the missionaries did not stop preaching about these practices, they established dispensaries at their mission posts and later clinic and hospitals scattered far and wide (Kyeremateng 1999:17).

The greatest of the social services which the Christian churches pioneered was formal education. They saw the need to open schools out of which would come not only catechist and teachers but scholars for public and private services in the country. Examples of the schools they established include Wesley Girls High School (1884), Adisadel College (1910), Saint Augustine's College (1936) etc. Indeed, before the 1950s, pre-university education, including teacher education was largely in the hands of the Christian churches (Boahen 2000:140).

Islamic influences penetrated the Savanna kingdoms by peaceful means through the activities of traders and itinerant scholars. Muslim influence brought in its wake a development of literacy in terms of the koranic schools which produced Islamic scholars who served as secretaries and an example is the Kumasi palaces, where these secretaries were responsible for recording major events. They also introduced reading and writing and a new mode of dressing (Okyere 2000:84).

The Christian influence on Ghanaian society has been achieved through the product of the church schools and colleges, particularly those placed in high positions. These men and women placed in high positions do influence national attitudes, thinking and policy making; as they serve in the Ghanaian society as church leaders, opinion leaders, social commentators, parliamentarians, among others. Church leaders have become such great and revered people in Ghana today that they are called upon to speak on nearly every issue that crops up – even where the issues have no relation whatsoever to do with the 'church.' The fallacy of appeal to irrelevant or false authority in mind! The Christian churches have also succeeded in removing many obsolete and inhuman practices and taboos from the society and have helped to cut down the unnecessary expenses connected particularly with marriages and funerals – though this research holds that church marriage is more expensive in Ghana today than the expenses one incurs on traditional marriage. Parallel to the Christian council, the Catholics also have set up the National Catholic Secretariat. Each of these two bodies operate through several departments, each responsible for one or other of the social services: education, social communications, social and economic developments and inter church relations. The country's religious groups co-operate with government in national development

programmes like education, health and agricultural services to rural communities. They also undertake rehabilitation of the handicapped as well as dissemination of civic information of national importance. Together the religious groups have been and continue to be the mouthpiece of the silent majority on national issues and on matters of peace and justice (Boahen 2000:141). Even so, in Ghana today, there is a new Christian movement, called the 'prophetic movement' wherein every church leader is now a prophet and a seer. Most of these prophets do not only use rhetoric to exploit their followers but they also engage in persuasive speaking (using propaganda and fallacies) to mislead their followers. These aside, why has there been such incessant heaving and thrusting among the apostles of God or Belzebub to gain credit for prophesying Ebony Reign's (a younger talented musician who died through motor accident in February 8, 2018). One prophet declares, after the death of the young singer Ebony: "the Lord opened my eye that the singer called Ebony, she has a short life. I saw her having a fatal lorry accident… if she does not change her ways, it will come to pass (https://www.myjpyonline.com. February 24, 2018).

Another prophet revealed that Ebony was going to die, just like Terry Bonchaka, another young Ghanaian musician who died in 2000, in a car accident and nothing was done to prevent it? So many questions, few answers! (https://www.myjpyonline.com. February 24, 2018).

Why will you be asking people who attend your crusade to contribute $5,000 – as special offering?

It is common knowledge in Ghana today to see prophets stepping on the bodies of congregants after they, the congregants, have been asked to lie prostrate. What are the prophets exorcising? Some pastors will touch each congregant entering the church and say "your wealth is on the way, you have a chronic illness, they use your head as a football, I can foretell your future success" (https://www.myjpyonline.com. February 24, 2018).

It is wrong to label some of these prophets as "charlatans? They are only fleecing the flock, many of whom are illiterate, uninformed and to crown it all, obsequious, sycophantic and gullible. They would reveal to you the source of your bareness – your senile, toothless mother who is suffering from amnesia may answer to all kinds of accusations and instead of loving care, you pounce on her and beat her up.

These churches come with different kinds of names as the leaders, prophets claim they (the names) were revealed to them: Pay your tithe and offering bible church of God; Satan in Trouble ministries; Fist of Fury Church; David Killed Your Life Ministry are some of the names you can find. Their services run from Monday to Sunday. Each day has a special programme which the faithful followers have to attend to enjoy benefits (https://www.myjpyonline.com. February 24, 2018). How can you come out of poverty only with faith, and no action?

Religious leaders seem to dwell so much on the idea of faith without reason to mostly mislead and dupe their followers. Such religious leaders will normally quote Hebrews 11:6; "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exits and that he rewards those who earnestly seek

him (The Holy Bible, NIV)." They, the religious leaders, will quote this and explain to the followers that following God only requires faith and belief but not argumentation and being critical on God's instructions. Such statements from these religious leaders are not only misleading but also rob members of the core element, at least according to Aristotle and Descartes, that make us human beings and separate us from other forms of animal – reason (Aristotle 2004:4, Descartes 1961:28).

Based on the above explanation that these prophets always advise their followers to use faith and beliefs but not reason in accepting the things of God, they may direct the worshippers to bring their panties (especially women) for blessing or destruction, et cetera. The penurious worshippers will dish out their last cedis when the collection bowl goes around, helping the rich prophets/pastors continue to lead ostentatious lifestyles. Anointing water and anointing oil are sold at exorbitant prices and the church continues to multiply; thereby, there are more churches in Accra and Kumasi in Ghana today than there are schools in the same places today. How and why did all these happen? They came with the gun and the Bible: the gun to cow us and the bible to proselytize. It is these trends that have dogged us and subdued us for all this while (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 22, 2018).

Another social (and to some extent political) situation in Ghana today is how to deal with small-scale mining (popularly known in Ghana as *galamsay*) which has destroyed and continue to destroy water bodies in Ghana. Shortly after being sworn into office in 2017, the Akufo-Addo (the current president of Ghana) led government declared war on '*galamsay*' or illegal small-scale mining activities. Before the declaration of the war, rivers were polluted, the air fouled, environment degraded, etc. As part of the war,

illegal small-scale mining in all its forms was banned; perpetrators arrested and some prosecuted by an Operation Vanguard team made up of military and police personnel put together to protect the country's resources (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 22, 2018). How anyone could describe this move as wrong, experts say, is only a propagandist and fallacious thinking.

In a related development to the small-scale mining menace, let us look at a claim made by Ghana's Water Company boss, Dr. Clifford Braimah. According to Dr. Braimah, Ghana is gradually losing the war on illegal small-scale mining despite chalking some success in the initial stages of the Operation Vanguard activities staged to curb and or stop illegal mining (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 22, 2018). The managing Director of the Ghana Water Company Dr. Clifford Braimah has revealed his company is now beginning to spend as much money in treating water now as it did before the war on illegal mining popularly known as *galamsay* began. According to him, before the *galamsay* activities, his outfit only spent 3bags of aluminium sulphate to treat the water but that shot up to 12bags in the wake of *galamsay* war. Shortly after *galamsay* war was declared, the company, he said started using five bags of aluminium sulphate to treat the water. But that has changed again. "As at yesterday, we are using 10bags of aluminium sulphate per day. What it means is that we are losing the fight against the 'galamsay' menace. So the Operation Vanguard probably is not the way to go", Dr. Braimah said at a programme to mark the world water day (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 22 2018). This, among others, we shall later see in this work, critical assessment of the socio-political situation on Ghana today.

Another social situation in Ghana today is littering and open defecation in the country by its citizens. Sanitation Police in the Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi, have arrested four people for littering and open defecation (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 18, 2018). "The arrest, carried out in an Operation Thursday, May 17, 2018, morning, is part of city authorities' efforts to clean the city and enhance the bylaws on sanitation. The sanitation police will arraign the suspects before court and have them fined; authorities told joy news". But even before taking the people to court, some social commentators are condemning the arrest, saying, the people should not be arrested and fined because they would not have done what they are being accused of if they had toilet and other sanitary facilities in their homes or places of abode. Must people be allowed to defecate in the public because they have no toilet facilities in their homes or places of abode?

Deputy Environmental Health Officer, Edmund Komba says the punishment given to such people in the past was not stiff enough and says KMA is in the process of restructuring the laws. "We are refining the bylaws so we can charge more units", he said. He explained that the current provisions only permit the authorities to charge very low amounts which are not deterrent enough. "So, we are using the Public Health Act and the criminal offenders Act to charge sanitation offenders" he said. Mr. Komba also has charged residents to assist the authorities to help make the city clean by apprehending sanitation offenders. According to him, the laws permit citizens to arrest anyone they see dumping refuse at an unapproved location or engaging in open defecation (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 18, 2018). Thus, it is assumed that people who engage in open defecation know that there could be arrested and prosecuted. So, why do they still engage in it – open defecation? Could opinion leaders, social commentators,

political leaders among others have the courage to arrest and prosecute? In Ghana today, it doesn't look like leaders will have the courage to prosecute because of, among other reasons, fear of losing power, losing their followers, etc.

A very good example to buttress the point above is what is happening in Ghana currently at the Cape Coast Castle. The Cape Coast Castle which was used as a holding place before slaves were loaded on to ships for Europe and the Americas is fast becoming an off-loading point of "goods" by some residents. The lenses of Myjoyonline photojournalist, David Andoh, caught some men defecating in the open around the Cape Coast Castle during a recent visit. The Central Regional Minister, Kwamena Duncan, last year called for a more radical approach to eradicating open defecation in the country (httpds://www.myjoyonline.com, May 18, 2018). This again, those who are involved in the act feel their right to feel free to do that which they so like to do is being infringed upon. Is this not intriguing and fallacious? Must one be allowed to do whatever one likes and feels free to do irrespective of how their acts affect other people and the environment?

Ethnicity, the common characteristics of a group of people, especially regarding ancestry, culture, language or national experience and tribalism, a feeling of identity and loyalty to one's tribe (race) constitute another social situation in Ghana today. Ghana is blessed with people from diverse cultures and background all integrated as one. However, the case of tribalism and ethnicity has threatened the peace in Ghana. We are in the wake of tribal wars that stuck the country leading to death of many people and destruction of property. Tribalism is being practiced even in work places in Ghana and it has become a major social problem facing Ghana today (https://www.yen.com.gh. May 24, 2018). For instance, the General Overseer of the International Central Gospel

Church, Dr. Mensa Otabil, in a sermon, condemned the rate of tribalism in Ghana. In his sermon "Living the Christian Life," the highly respected man of God lamented over how Ghanaians choose tribalism over their Christian faith and love for all (Yen.com.gh, 24th May 2018). Choosing tribalism over quality and who best qualifies to be appointed to a position and or employed for a job position is something that scholars must interrogate. How does this affect output and do we deal with the question of integrity at work places if we only have to employ solely our tribe's men and women to work with.

A research conducted by the Centre for Democratic Government (CDD), a policy think-tank in Ghana, has indicated that, in Ghana today, most Ghanaians trust religious leaders to solve national issues than government officials and appointees and medical doctors, etc. could help solve. This may sound controversial but the social situation in Ghana today may have contributed to why most Ghanaians today may choose to trust religious leaders. This position is also supported by Kunhiyop when he opines that, every society is influenced by its history, beliefs and values (Kunhiyop 2008:3). Ghanaians, like other African countries, believe even more in traditional medicine than orthodox medicine (Kunhiyop 2008:316). The research further pointed out that the majority of Ghanaians feel government officials and appointees do not listen to the cry of the (local) people, hence the lack of trust. They added that, the majority of Ghanaians see government officials as corrupt and do not think they are the right people to solve societal issues. According to the research 71% of Ghanaians never contacted government officials about problems or to offer their opinions (https://www.ghanaweb.com. March 1, 2018). They see the church as the only place to run for everything. What this position has led to –

congregants being asked to drink concussions, being lashed at church, etc. all in the name of deliverance, etc. – has left lots to be desired (Geisler 1989:57).

It is refreshing to know, that, Prof. Martey, a renowned and celebrated Presbyterian Priest, has named the church as a promoter of corruption in Ghana (Prof. Martey – The church is a promoter of corruption in Ghana – https://www.ghhanaweb.com. March 15, 2018). The Former Moderator of the Presbyterian church of Ghana, Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Martey, has identified the church as one of the promoters and root causes of corruption in Ghana. Corruption thrives so well in Ghana today. Kunhiyop explains corruption as a feature of African social, political and even religious life, with disastrous consequences. Kunhiyop asserts, "corruption is illegal everywhere in Africa, but everywhere it is woven deep into the fabric of everyday life. From the bottle of whiskey slipped under the counter to speed a traveller's way through customs, to the presidents and ex-presidents living way beyond their declared means, it results in an assumption that no business will ever get done without a present changing hands" (Kunhiyop 2008:164). There is corruption everywhere in Ghana today.

Prof. Martey indicated that three main sources were responsible for the insurmountable fight against corruption. The constitution, culture and the church according to him were solely responsible for the menace. Making a contribution at an, Institute of Economic Affairs roundtable discussion on the theme "Can Ghana win the fight against Corruption?", the renowned religious leader posited that the activities of the church have contributed to the growing corruption menace in Ghana. He said, "There is a paralysis of analysis as regards corruption in this country. We have not really touched the root cause(s) of corruption". He further opined that "Our constitution promotes

corruption, Ghanaian culture promotes corruption, and Ghana has a gift receiving and giving culture. Gifts are appreciated when given so even a politician in an election year goes around and takes gifts with him and gives to traditional leaders and it is appreciated ... This is killing our nation," he said (https://www.ghanaweb.com. March 15, 2018).

These religious issues have led to some pastors in Ghana today predicting even elections results and lottery outcomes. An example of this which has become very controversial in Ghana today is a prophecy of two prominent Prophets in Ghana: Prophet Isaac Owusu Bempah and Prophet Nigel Gaisy.

"Go ahead, contest and disgrace yourself" ─ Owusu Bempah tells John Mahama (former president of Ghana, July 2012 to January 2017) about election 2020. Isaac Owusu Bempah, head Pastor and leader of Glorious Word Power International Ministry has said again that former President Mahama will still lose the 2020 elections no matter what (https://www.yen.com.gh. May 24, 2018). According to him, Mr. Mahama has no political future therefore he should "go and rest". Owusu Bempah made these comments after the former President declared his intention on Saturday 19th May 2018 to context the 2020 elections on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Interestingly, another Prophet known as Nigel Gaisy, had made a "counter" prophecy against President Akufo-Addo about election 2020. According to him President Akufo-Addo will get the shock of his life after that election (https://www.yen.com.gh. May 24, 2018). So, whose report do we believe and or accept? How does one know whose prophesy is from God? How can the same God both prophets claim revealed to them (what they claim) give them different prophecies? Is He a God of confusion? Nay! 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not the author of confusion …" (Holy Bible, King James Version).

Almost every church in Ghana today has a prophet – lest the church loses members. The followers have become very gullible. This introductory chapter of the work will not provide details of the gullibility of members of these religions; the subsequent chapters will deal with the details.

1.4 Education and critical thinking in Ghana today

The Ghanaian education system today is divided into three parts: Basic Education, Second Cycle (Secondary Education) and Tertiary Education. Basic Education lasts 11 years (Age 4-15), is free and compulsory. It is divided into Kindergarten (2 years), primary school (2 modules of 3 years) and Junior High school (3 years). The junior high school (JHS) ends with the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Once the BECE is achieved, the pupil can pursue a secondary education. Secondary education can be either general (assumed by Senior High School) or vocational (assumed by technical Senior High School, Technical and vocational Institutes and a massive private and informal offer). Senior High school lasts three years and ends with the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Other secondary institutions lead to various certifications and diplomas. Tertiary education is basically divided into university (academic education) and polytechnics (vocational education). The WASSCE is needed to join a university bachelor's degree program or a polytechnic program. A bachelor's degree lasts 4 years and can be followed by a 1 or 2 years Post Graduate Degree. The student is then free to start a PhD, usually completed in 3 years or more. Polytechnics are opened to vocational students, from SHS or from TVI (Technical and

Vocational institutions). A Polytechnic curriculum lasts 2 to 3 years. Ghana also possesses numerous colleges of education where basic school teachers are trained. New tertiary education graduates have to serve one year within the National Service Scheme. The Ghanaian education system from Kindergarten up to an undergraduate degree level takes 20 years. Today, secondary education, under the new president, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo Addo, is also free. Secondary education became free from September 2017 (Ministry of Education 2018). How all these initiatives and educational reforms can translate into critical thinking in the minds of Ghanaians, one is yet to see. And this, among others, shows why this work is very important.

1.5 The political environment of Ghana today

The Gold Coast riots in 1948, which marked the start of the people's agitation for independence, were instrumental in changing British policy and driving home the point that colonialism had no future. But a long struggle still lay ahead and the man who was the catalyst of that struggle was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who was born in 1909.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was trained as a teacher at Achimota College in Ghana and then in the United States and Britain, where he obtained his degrees. He became prominent as a leader of West African organizations in London and was invited to return to Ghana as General Secretary of the erstwhile United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) with the slogan "Self government in the shortest possible time". In 1949 he broke away to form the Convention People's Party (CPP) with the slogan "Self-Government Now". In February 1951 the party swept to victory in the polls organised that year and became the

leaders of Government business in the colony's first African government. The Gold Coast had become the first British colony in Africa to achieve self-government. On 6 March 1957 Ghana achieved independence again, the first British colony in Africa to do so with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, popularly known as Osagyefo, as its first Prime Minister (Buah 1980:60).

Ghana became a republic on 1st July, 1960, with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as its first President. The party that brought him to power is the Convention People's Party, CPP. Ghana spearheaded the political advancement of Africa and Dr. Nkrumah laid the foundations for the unity later expressed in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). He was a firm supporter of the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned movement. On 24th February 1966, there was a military overthrow of the 1st Republican government (Buah 1980:64).

During the Second Republic, that was from February 24, 1966 to April 2, 1969, the National Liberation Council (NLC), headed by Lt. General Joseph Arthur Ankrah came to power and was formed to administer the country. General Ankrah was removed from office in April 1969 and Lt. General Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa became the Chairman of the NLC, which later gave way to a three-man Presidential Commission with General Afrifa as chairman. The Commission paved the way for a general election in 1969 which brought into power the Progress Party government, with Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia as Prime Minister and Mr. Edward Akufo Addo as president. There existed two key parties at the time, the NLC and the PP (Boahen 2000:78).

In 1972, there was a military overthrow of the second Republic and Colonel (later General) Ignatius Kutu Acheampong became the Head of State and Chairman of the

National Redemption Council (NRC). The name of the NRC was later changed to the Supreme Military Council (SMC). General Acheampong was replaced by General F. W. K. Akuffo in a palace coup in July 1978. The SMC was overthrown on 4th June 1979, in a mass revolt of junior officers and men of the Ghana armed forces. Following the uprising, an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was set up under the chairmanship of Flt.-Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. The AFRC carried out a house-cleaning exercise in the armed forces and society at large, while restoring a sense of moral responsibility and the principle of accountability and pro-bity in public life. The AFRC was in office for only three months and, in pursuance of a programme already set in motion before the uprising, allowed general elections to be held (Boahen 2000:80). These narrations and political instability coupled with military rules impeded education system in Ghana as people always lived in fear and could, therefore, rarely think critically.

The Third Republic saw the AFRC handing over power to the civilian administration of Dr. Hilla Limann, leader of the People's National Party which had won the elections on 24th September 1979. In the wake of the continuing downward plunge of the country, the Limann administration was overthrown on 31st December 1981, ushering in a new revolutionary era of far-reaching reforms and rehabilitation at all levels. Flt.-Lt. Rawlings became the Chairman of a nine-member Provisional National Defence Council, (PNDC) with Secretaries of State in charge of the various ministries being responsible to the PNDC (Boahen 2000:86).

Immediately, on assumption of office, the PNDC set up a National Commission for Democracy (NCD) charged with emulating a programme for the more effective realisation

of true democracy. The Government of the PNDC also provided for the establishment of elected District Assemblies to bring local government to the grassroots.

In 1990, the NCD, at the prompting of the PNDC, organised forums in all the 10 regions of the country at which Ghanaians of all walks of life advanced their views as to what form of government they wanted. These views were collated and analysed by the NCD whose final report indicated that the people wanted a multi-party system of government. This led to the appointment of a Committee of Experts to draw up constitutional proposals for the consideration of a Consultative Assembly. The Assembly prepared a draft constitution based on proposals submitted to it by the PNDC, as well as previous constitutions of 1957, 1969 and 1979, and the report of the Committee of Experts. The final draft constitution was unanimously approved by the people in a referendum on April 28, 1992 (Boahen 2000:92).

Among other things, the Constitution provides for an Executive President elected by universal adult suffrage for a term of four years and eligible for re-election for only one additional term. In the presidential elections held on November 3, 1992, Flt.-Lt- Rawlings, who stood on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), garnered 58.8% of the 3,989,020 votes cast to beat to second place his closest rival Prof. Albert Adu Boahen representing the New Patriotic Party (NPP) who polled 30.4% of the votes. Other contestants for the presidency were former president Dr. Hilla limann of the People's National Convention (PNC) – 6.7%, Mr. Kwabena Darko of the National Independence Party – NIP – (2.8%) and Lt- Gen. Emmanuel Erskine representing the People's Heritage Party – PHP – (1.7%).

In the parliamentary elections held on December 29,1992, the Progressive Alliance made up of the National Democratic Congress, the National Convention Party and the Eagle Party won 198 seats out of a total of 200, within the Alliance the NDC won 189 seats, the NCP had 8, the Eagle Party 2, and Independents 2. Four parties - the NPP, PNC, NIP and PHP - boycotted the parliamentary elections, dissatisfied with the proposed election strategy (Boahen 2000:104).

The Fourth Republic was inaugurated on January 7, 1993 with the swearing-in of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings as President and his running mate, Mr. K. N. Arkaah as Vice President. The newly elected Parliament was opened on the same day and elected, Mr. Justice D. F. Annan as Speaker. In 1996, Rawlings was re-elected for a second term. Under Jerry Rawlings' rule, Ghana became the most politically stable and prosperous nation in West Africa and provided a model of development for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

In the December 7, 2000 elections, John A. Kuffuor of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), won the largest share of the presidential vote with 48.17% of the vote, compared to 44.54.% for Rawlings' vice-president and hand-picked successor, John Atta Mills of the NDC. The NPP also won 100 of the 200 seats in Parliament. The NDC won 92 seats, while independent and small party candidates won eight seats. In the December 28 run-off election (because no presidential candidate had the constitutional requirement of 50% plus 1 vote), with pledges of support from the other five opposition parties, Kuffuor defeated Mills by winning 56.73% of the vote and the NPP picked up one additional MP by winning a by-election, giving them 100 seats and a majority in Parliament. Both rounds

of the election were observed, and declared free and fair by a large contingent of domestic and international monitors (Boahen 2000:135).

President Kuffuor took the oath of office on January 7, 2001, becoming the first elected president in Ghana's history, in the fourth republic, from an opposition party, to succeed another elected president, an incumbent president. He was re-elected in December 2004 for a second four- year term, becoming the first civilian president (without a military background) to fully serve his tenure and go ahead to be re-elected. Political instability and the intervention of the military were unlikely, particularly given Kuffuor's ability to turn the Ghanaian economy around since he came to power. Despite his outbursts, Rawlings' career as a serial coup maker appears to be over. Nevertheless, following his inauguration in January 2001, President Kuffuor appeared to backtrack on many popular policies which brought him electoral success. Apparently more interested in appeasing Western donors and international financial institutions than bolstering his own popularity, Kuffuor pledged a period of austerity measures. He claimed he was fully aware of the dangers this could pose to Ghana's political stability. In his swearing-in ceremony he warned that the ailing economy would "put severe strains on our people's beliefs and enthusiasm for the democratic process" unless donors step up their assistance (https://www.ghanaweb.co m. November 20, 2017).

After Kuffour, John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills was elected after winning the run-off of the 2008 general elections. For the next three and half years, President Mills was presented with the opportunity to implement his electoral promises like his flagship One Time National Health Insurance Policy, creating jobs, ridding Accra of its filth, reversing

the duration of Senior High School education and reducing fuel prices drastically among others under his "Better Ghana Agenda" – and this chapter hopes to point out all fallacies inherent in political speeches and campaigns. From Wayomey – alleged and charged with defrauding by false pretence for the state to wrongly pay in excess of fifty two million Ghana cedis to him – to the failed STL deal – a deal that would have brought some foreign contractors to build housing facilities for members of the Police force in Ghana –, Atta Millls' era was characterized by a lot of political scandals. And from "babies with sharp teeth" to "Team B players", he together with his appointees were subjected to numerous barrage of public ridicule for what critics called a "mismanagement of the economy". But aside what his critics said of his failures, he was successful in constructing blood transfusion centres, undertaking upgrade and rehabilitation works on the Tamale Teaching Hospital among others. But unfortunately, his tenure was short lived when he died on 24th July 2012 just 3 days after his birthday. He was succeeded by his vice-president John Dramani Mahama who served the remaining five months of Mills' tenure of office (https://www.ghanaweb.com. November 20, 2017).

President John Dramani Mahama became the nation's fourth president under the Fourth Republic after winning the 2012 general elections. His tenure rather started on a very bumpy note as his authority to serve as president was challenged in a historic landmark case at the Nation's Supreme Court with a petition filled by the then opposition party the New Patriotic Party led by its National Chairman the late Jake Obetsebi Lamptey, flagbearer Nana Akufo-Addo and his running mate Dr. Bawumia disputing his (Mahama's) victory in the 2012 election. After seven gruelling months of legal battle at the Supreme Court which was marked by uncertainty, John Mahama's electoral victory

was validated by the Supreme Court and the way was now cleared for him to fully focus on governing the country. But from the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), Ghana Youth and Entrepreneurial Agency (GYEDA), to Subah Info Solutions Limited and the Bus Branding Saga, the era of John Mahama just like his predecessor's, was equally punctuated with a lot of corruption scandals. Yet, many were his achievments; from the Cape Coast Sports Stadium, the Kotokoraba market, the University of Ghana Teaching Hospital to the Kwame Nkrumah interchange, his contribution to Ghana's infrastructure development is rivalled only by Nkrumah's. Again, his era when he also briefly acted as the chair of the Economic Committee of West African States (ECOWAS), marked an era when the entire sub-region, was faced with numerous challenges like the Ebola pandemic and other coup attempts all of which he successfully dealt with. But Mahama's reign ended after only his first term in office making him the only one term president under Ghana's Fourth Republic (https://www.ghanaweb.com. November 20, 2017).

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the veteran politician succeeded John Dramani Mahama after winning the December 2016 presidential election making him the Fifth President under the Fourth Republic after two previous failed attempts. Currently, it is early days yet in the presidency of Nana Addo to make a serious assessment of his tenure of office but that notwithstanding, certain policies and actions which have been undertaken or in the pipeline, are worth mentioning. Firstly, in the nation's 60 years history, Nana Addo's ministerial appointment of 110 members makes his list of ministers, the largest in our history. Worth noting is also the fact that, in less than a year in office, some of his campaign promises have been kicked started. The free Senior High School

education, the Restoration of Teachers and Nurses Allowance, and the Creation of the Zongo Development Fund among others (https://www.ghanaweb.com. March 15, 2018).

In Ghana today, issues with politics in the country have always been discussed with lots of propaganda and innuendo cast at one another. The situation has always been bridled with lots of allegations, most of them very frivolous, perky and illogical (as they are laced with lots of fallacies). To cite some instances of these, frivolous allegations, a renowned politician of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the biggest opposition political party, who doubles as the General Secretary of the (NDC), Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketia, has stated that the order by President Nana Akufo- Addo for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to invite for questioning, the president of the Ghana Football Association (GFA), Mr. Kwesi Nyantakyi, is part of a diversionary tactics introduced by government to move public attention from the controversial "Ministry of Communications" contract with Kelni GVG (https://www.graphiconline.com. May 24, 2018).

Government has recently signed $89million contract with Kelni GVG to deal with revenue losses and simbox fraud involving telecommunication companies. Imani Ghana – A policy Think-tank – has said the contract was fraught with fraud and must be cancelled; arguing that the company does not have the track record to undertake the job that has been given to it and also, according to the Think-tank, is needless (https://www.graphiconline.com. May 24, 2018).

The National Communication Authority (NCA) has since discounted Imani's claim in the ongoing media exchanges on the contract. To Mr. Asiedu Nketia, President Akufo-

Addo's action on Nyantakyi was premature, especially as the said video implicating the GFA boss for peddling and defrauding by false pretence was yet to be shown for public viewing. Has the police investigators at the (CID) spearheading the investigations and interrogating Mr. Nyantakyi seen the said video; No! "So on what basis are they questioning the GFA boss?", Mr. Asiedu Nketia questioned in a radio interview with Asempa Fm, a local radio station (Asempa Fm, 23rd May, 2018). Meanwhile, Mr. Asiedu Nketia also makes a very wild allegation (not based on any evidence) that President Akuffo-Addo is engaging in diversionary tactics. Why all these political situations are worth scholarly investigation is to bring to the fore how such allegations, if not properly supported with cogent evidence, could amount to mere rhetoric and, perhaps, emotional speeches.

Another political situation in Ghana is a shocking revelation by Koku Anyidoho, a deputy general secretary of the NDC, who was invited by the CID for making claims which were deemed treacherous to national security (https://www.graphiconline.com. 24th May 2018). In Ghana today, people can hide behind political parties and, in the name of democracy, make very "wild and uncritical" allegations about political opponents.

The Deputy General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr. Koku Anyidoho has called for support for President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in the fight against corruption. According to him, previous Presidents of Ghana had their own ways tried to fight corruption; hence it was necessary for Ghanaians to rally behind President Akufo-Addo to help reduce the menace of corruption in the country. "I have seen President Mills fight corruption, I have seen President Rawlings do it and I have seen President Mahama do it. Even President Kuffour did it in the case of Mallam Issah.

So, if President Akufo-Addo is also doing it, let us support him to fight corruption". Mr. Anyidoho said (https://www.graphiconline.com. May 24, 2018). The case here, however, is the way of presentation. While some people have supported and commended the fight against corruption, others have insisted that the fight is just a hoax. Do we throw our hands in the air and consider this a hopeless pursuit? This work, especially in chapter three, explains how political fanatism and the political tension between the two political parties that have ruled Ghana since the inception of the fourth republic of Ghana, can affect the way we think or are supposed to think critically before accepting or rejecting a political position.

In a radio interview with Asempa Fm, Mr. Anyidoho said the President's move in the Kwesi Nyantakyi's case stated earlier is an indication of his (the president's) readiness to fight corruption in the country. According to Mr. Anyidoho, the scandals are becoming one too many. "Look at the issue about communications ministry $89million contract with Kelni GVG deal with revenue losses and simbox fraud involving telecommunication companies, look at the way IMANI is going after Urslar Owusu (communication minister)." Just 16, 17 months into office by the NPP government it is mind boggling that there is one government scandal after another (Asempa Fm, 23rd May 2018). To Mr. Anyidoho, once President Akufo-Addo himself reported the Kwesi Nyantakyi influence peddling and defrauding by false pretence case to the police, it means the President is prepared to fight corruption. Mr. Anyidoho further stated that "I think I respect Akufo-Addo that he has to take this decision. That you (Nyantakyi) said he is in your pocket, the president of the Republic of Ghana is in your (Nyantakyi) pocket? So as much as I feel sorry for Nyantakyi, no President of this Republic should be in the pocket of anybody, never". He said he

believes in the police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) will be professional in its work (https://www.graphiconline.com. May 24, 2018). Lots of commentators on this issue have peddled more propaganda (since none of these commentators have come out with any logically valid argument, based on evidence yet) than anything else.

Another political issue in Ghana which in recent weeks has become (the) topic of the day is the issue of same-sex marriage (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 22, 2018). I am citing this issue here because it is another area where commentators who have discussed it have most, if not always, based their discussion on emotions and beliefs rather than reason. Again here, instead of political activists to argue dispassionately based on evidence and logic, these activists have made the issue a 'political football.' While members of the main or biggest opposition party, the NDC, are making very serious accusations involving the president, Akuffo-Addo, etc., members of the ruling party, the NPP (New Patriotic Party), are also making counter allegations. All the allegations and or commentaries on this same-sex issue could be summarized as a case of attacking one another in a manner that rather leaves the real issue undiscussed.

In Ghana today, each day comes with one political allegation of corruption after the other. One other example of such political situation in Ghana is an allegation coming from a controversial member of the NPP, popularly known as Kwame A Plus, a politician by default and a musician by trade or profession. According to A Plus, an appointee of President Akufo-Addo has allegedly splashed out GHS 100,000 (one hundred thousand cedis) to pay for a single flight ticket.

This allegation is being made by NPP insider Kwame A Plus who said a lot is happening on the blind side of the President. According to A Plus, this unnamed appointee spent GHC 100,000 cedis on just one trip. He made this revelation at the tail end of a long post he made regarding the arrest of Kwesi Nyantakyi, the GFA boss (https://www.mynewsgh.com. May 24, 2018). Again, when he, A Plus, was asked to produce evidence, he failed to do so. Do we continue living in a country where anyone can just make an allegation without any evidence or proof? This work investigates why these allegations must be critically examined and interrogated.

According to A Plus, Nyantakyi is only being sacrificed to cover the 89/178 million dollars Kelni GVG stinking scandal. Just about a year ago "I accused Asenso of being corrupt. Hon. Kennedy Agyapong is said to have accused Urslar Owusu of being corrupt and alleged that people are charged huge sums of money before they are allowed to see the President" (https://www.mynewsGh.com. May 24, 2018). Imani Ghana is asking the same Urslar Owusu to resign because of some shady deals at the communication ministry and NCA. According to A Plus, it is even suspected that the fraudulent deal is the reason why a board member has resigned and many who do not want to be implicated in anyway will follow. It is also being reported or alleged (by the same A Plus) that Kwesi Nyantakyi asked people to go and bribe the same Asenso so that he (Asenso) reminds the President of their deal. Out of the about 27 million people in Ghana, you think it's only Nyantakyi who knows how "cheap" Ghana is and who to bribe? We are hearing about this one that has backfired (https://www.mynewsGh.com. May 24, 2018). So, in Ghana today, politically, there are lots and lots of allegations thrown at people and it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell, using critically thinking and logical rules, who is right and who is wrong.

Another political situation in Ghana today that could be cited as an example to support how Ghanaians are talking about political issues has to do with the current government's plan to issue what has now come to be referred to as Ghana Card – a New National Identification Card. Issuance of the new National Identification Card was set to begin in April 2018, the vice President, Dr. Mahamadu Bawumia, had disclosed. Speaking at the Ghana-Norway Business Forum in Accra, Dr. Bawumia said "A lot of work has been done and all things being equal, we expect a rollout of Ghana's National ID System, Ghana Card, next month – April 2018" (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 20, 2018). "This means we are going to provide unique identification to everybody in Ghana, whether you are a foreigner or a citizen, we will have unique numbers and this will automatically transform into your tax identification numbers so when you don't fill your tax, we know" (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 20, 2018).

The National ID Card dubbed Ghana Card, according to government, would help to modernize and formalize the Ghanaian economy through the establishment of a credible national database. The ID card is meant to be the primary ID card that citizens will use to access all services in the country, including even travelling within the West African Sub-Region. It will be the only valid ID for application for a bank account, passport, telephone number, property acquisition, drivers' license and many more (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 20, 2018).

Head of Information Technology at the National Identification authority, NIA, Matilda Wilson, said in November last year that the smart Ghana Card will not come cheap because the claims of applicants will be put to strike proof before they are issued with one (https://www.myjoyonline.com. May 20, 2018). Here too, instead of all and

sundry embracing the idea without any form of propaganda, commentators have chosen to do propaganda laced with fallacies, to the extent that the minority in parliament have threatened to boycott the exercise, if some amendments are not made to the NIA Bill. Even so, this is a bill the minority members were part in passing it at parliament. What is their bone of contention? Whereas the NIA Bill (which was passed by a parliament comprising both majority and minority members) indicates that only Birth Certificate or Passport could be used to register for the Ghana Card, the minority members are now asking for amendment to include Voter Registration Cards.

This narration is very relevant to this work. It sets the stage to interrogate the socio-political atmosphere in Ghana today. So much has changed – socially and politically – since the coming in of the fourth republic. Lots of socio-political speeches and writings have been made. The current political situation in Ghana has made the country a two-party state – NDC and NPP. No other political party has had the opportunity to win an election and form a government apart from the two political parties aforesaid. The political speeches of political leaders and social commentaries of religious leaders, among others, form the raw material of this thesis in general as have been discussed in subsequent chapters?

1.6 Conclusion

All in all, we need to understand what Ghana stands for today in terms of social and political situations that prevail. Knowing the history of Ghana – religious, educational, political, etc. – will help us address Ghana's present socio-political situation. Similarly, we

need to understand the socio-political values and beliefs that guide socio-political discourses in Ghana if we are to develop a culture of critical thinking that can guide in the day-to-day assessments of socio-political discourses. One thing that could be said in this chapter is that, failure to appreciate the important point of creating in Ghana today a culture and or system of critical thinking has led (and will continue to lead) to shallow religious teachings and practices and political commentaries that have little if not zero impact on the populace. There are lots of controversial issues or situations in Ghana today which cut across all aspects of the country; including political, social and religious issues. These situations have been reported by the numerous news media centres etc. Some of these political and social issues reported in the various news media in the country have been raised in this chapter. One would have thought that religion, education, political discussions, should make people better placed and informed. Even so, as has already been said again and again in this chapter, this does not reflect what the people of Ghana do. The proceeding chapters will now discuss, painstakingly, the fallacies involved in such and other related commentaries.

Chapter Two

Context of Informal Fallacies

2.1 Introduction

We cannot begin to evaluate someone's reasoning if we do not understand it, or if we understand the words but fail to grasp that reasons are being offered for accepting a point of view. The skills upon which this chapter focuses – recognizing reasoning, and identifying conclusions, reasons and assumptions – are the most basic abilities; upon them the important skills involved in evaluating reasoning depend. Reasoning is, of course, presented in language, but not all communications in language involve reasoning, so we need to be able to pick out those features of language which tell us that reasoning is taking place. It is clear that we use language for a variety of purposes. For example, we may use it to tell a joke, to commend or reprimand someone, to report factual or non-factual information, to describe a scene and personality, to tell a story, to express our feelings, to explain why we have acted or not acted in a particular way, to ask questions, to issue orders, etc. An argument offers a reason or reasons in support of a conclusion (Thompson, 2002:5).

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the various forms of informal fallacies, highlighting their general usage in modern political, social discourses or contexts. The chapter begins with definitions of some key concepts which will be used in this study, and then proceeds to give a quick survey of some informal fallacies. Then it (the chapter) demonstrates how these fallacies are implored in arguments for purposes

(or otherwise) of persuading listeners. The chapter discusses ubiquitous informal fallacies mostly used in socio-political discourses.

2.2 Definition of key terms or concepts – logic, arguments, fallacies, etc.

Logic ordinarily and in its most primitive sense, as far back as Aristotle, credited as the father of logic, is that philosophic specialism that is both a propaedeutic and as well deals with truth-worthy principles and methods for the discernment of truth. The laws of thought; the rules of right reasoning; and the principles of valid argumentation are elements of logic. When logic is said, for instance, to be the study of the laws of thought (Walton 1984:2), these laws of thought must be laws of correct reasoning. Since the 19th century, logic has been conceived as a study of how the mind works in the process of conception, judgment and inference (Aristotle 1987:14). Logic as the criteria for the evaluation of arguments is said to have as its fundamental task the provision of standards or criteria to judge whether an argument is logically correct (Uduma 2008:2). This means that the logician is interested in the validity of arguments. And since to say that an argument is valid is to say that if its premises are true, then its conclusion must be true, an argument is valid by virtue of its form (Farnside and Holther 1959:22). Because validity has to do with formal structures of an argument, logic as a study of conditions of validity is said to be a formal discipline (Capaldi 1973:47), and, this, at least for purposes of this work, constitutes the formal nature of logic.

Again, Logic may be defined as the organized body of knowledge, or science that evaluates arguments (Copi and Cohen 1990:15). All of us encounter arguments in our

day-to-day experience. We read them in books and newspapers, hear them on television shows, and formulate them when communicating with friends and associates and when we engage in discourses. The aim of logic is, this research agrees with Engel (Engel 1994:13), to develop a system of methods and principles that we may use as criteria for evaluating the arguments (and discourses) of others and as guides in constructing arguments of our own. A fallacy (details of which are explained later in this section of the research) could, simply be said to be, a defect in an argument that consists in something other than merely false premises (Engel 1994:14). As we will see, fallacies can be committed in many ways, but usually they involve either a mistake in reasoning or the creation of some illusion that makes a bad argument appear good (Hurley 2003:1).

The scope of the term 'logic' has varied widely from writer to writer through the centuries. This research and its scope will not discuss the varied controversies that have arisen as a result of the scope of logic. This research defines logic, in line with Farnside and Holther (Farnside and Holther 1959:85), as the study and evaluation of methods for assessing and or examining whether arguments are properly supported with good reasons to be called arguments. This definition, it is the position of this research, hopes to afford the reader the opportunity to learn and acquire strategies for thinking well and being able to detect possible errors in reasoning – both of other people and their own reasoning.

An argument here, simply put, is any form of discourse in which it could be said that reason(s) is/are being offered for the acceptance or otherwise of a certain position, claim, assertion, conclusion, etc (Kahane 1992:17). Arguments are composed of statements or propositions. A statement is any form of sentence that can be evaluated as

either being true or false. Example of a statement is, 'tomorrow is Friday because today is Thursday.' A statement is logically true if it is true by virtue solely of its logical structure; i.e., if all other statements having that structure are, regardless of their subject matter, likewise true (Kahane 1992:18). Logical truth, equivalence, and implication are not always readily detected. At the level of simplicity of these definitions and or explanations – defining statements using logical truth –error may occasionally arise in everyday discourses and engagements (Quine 2001:2).

According to Ade-Ali (2003:4), the systematic study of logic as a formal process of reasoning started with Aristotle (384-22 B. C.), hence, Aristotle being credited as the father of logic. The ubiquitous types of logic include Informal logic and Formal logic. In this research, I agree with Johnson and define informal logic as sentential or propositional logic – the logic as could be inferred from everyday discourses, argumentation as it is found in real-life settings (Johnson 1989:422) etc. and formal logic as the logic of symbols and implications. That is to say, formal logic is the study of one important logical relationship: implication – a relationship which holds (or does not) between statements (or propositions). Informal logic, on the other hand, deals with argumentation as it is found in real-life settings. Formal logic studies implication and hence is committed to discovering and perfecting methods for detecting valid and invalid implications. Informal logic studies argumentation with a view to developing methods and standards for demarcating between good and bad arguments (Johnson 1989:423). 'Good' and 'bad' as used in this research refer only to arguments (the soundness or unsoundness of arguments) and they have, as used here, nothing to do with morality.

According to Ade-Ali (Ade-Ali 2003:6), Logic – both formal and informal – is of relevance for the following reasons: the knowledge of logic guides against propaganda and enables one to evaluate and resist ballyhoo; logic enables the development of critical attitude toward the assumptions and presuppositions which form the bedrock of daily life experience and conversation and other people's arguments in such fields of politics, religion, economics, industry, etc.; the study and knowledge of logic and mastery of logical principles enhance the recognition and avoidance of errors (fallacies) in reasoning; logic is useful for serving as a watch dog to all forms of reasoning in daily discourses in all fields of human endeavours; and formal logic supplies the weapons, techniques, and principles for thinking systematically, aptly and for evaluating other people's thoughts. Logic, both formal and informal, it could be said, is concerned with correctness or otherwise of argumentation. The conception of logic as the study of arguments is historically fundamental, as can be seen in the works of the founders of distinct traditions of logic, namely Plato and Aristotle (Fischer 1978:28).

Everyone is subjected to the reasoning and or arguments of others. We are daily bombarded with reasoning from many sources: books, speeches, radio, television, newspapers, employers, friends, and family. Through the study of logic, one learns strategies for thinking well, common errors in reasoning to avoid, and effective techniques for evaluating arguments (Layman 1998:1). To be able to avoid common errors (fallacies) in reasoning, one needs to understand what these errors constitute.

In logic, a fallacy in general, is an error in the structure or content of an argument which prevents a conclusion from being rationally drawn from given premise(s) (Layman 1998:1). Hurley (2011:117) defines it as a defect in an argument other than false

premise(s) which cause(s) an argument to be invalid, unsound or weak. Put differentlly, a logical fallacy is a breach or violation – which could be done deliberately of inadvertently – of one or more of the principles that make a good argument, such as, good structure, clarity, consistency, order, relevance and completeness. Fallacies in general can be committed in many ways, and most often (fallacies) make bad arguments appear good. That is to say, a fallacy could be described as a defect or an error in reasoning in an argument. It comes from the Latin world '*fallor*' meaning 'I am deceived.' This agrees with Kahane's definition that a fallacy is an argument that should not persuade a rational person to accept its conclusion (Kahane 1992 :1). In a fallacy, the listener is deceived because a reasoning process appears to be sound without being the case. This is, perhaps, why Johnson defines a fallacy as an argument which appears to be good or valid but is not (Johnson 1989:408). Any argument that contains a fallacy is a bad argument. This means that any bad argument is bad because it contains a fallacy; it has one or more false premisses, or both. A person commits a fallacy if he or she accepts the conclusion of a fallacious argument (Hurley 2011:112).

Kahane (1992:1), like many logicians before him, divides fallacy into two categories: a) valid fallacious arguments (like the case of begging the question where the conclusion is a restatement of the premise or premises, as shall be seen in this research), and b) invalid fallacious arguments. The two categories cut across formal and informal fallacies. Kahane's view is that an argument which has suppressed or ignored unfavourable evidence should not persuade a rational person to accept its conclusion and hence is (in Kahane's sense of the term) fallacious. Massey (in Johnson 1989:410-411) has criticised Irvin Copi and others who have written copiously on fallacies as having

done shoddy reasoning. Massey holds that Copi did not provide any analysis of his (Copi's) arguments on fallacies. Even so, according to Johnson, Massey ended up committing similar or the same error he accuses Copi and others of (Johnson 1989:409). This research asserts that fallacies exist in the same way as wrong and or misleading reasoning exists.

The problem of defining fallacy has become the focus of scrutiny in the last two decades of the 20th century and then in this 21st century. If the fate of informal logic is, and it could be said it is, tied to the concept of fallacy, there may yet be hope for it. Fallacy here could be seen as a breach of the rules that govern rational discussion. A fallacy could be seen as a type of weakness, deficiency or breach of reasonable procedures in an argument or, which is open to criticism to the extent that the argument can be judged to be strongly refuted (Johnson 1989:415).

The burden of proof in arguments is part of the process of rational argumentation in dialogues that should be a characteristic of informal logic. However, there are some in the informal logic community, and very many in the formal logic and epistemology communities, who might disagree that evaluating an argument requires reference to a conversational (dialogue) setting or everyday discourse (Gordon & Walton 2009:242). The point being made here is that evaluating arguments in general and fallacies in particular has generated lots of controversies, making the area an interesting one.

According to Adler, a fallacy is technique of argumentation that may in principle be reasonable but that has been misused in a given case in such a way that it goes strongly against or hinders the goals of dialogue (Adler 1994:271-282).

Having explained the various definitions of fallacy in general, it is imperative to explain the main types of fallacy – formal and informal – as especially the latter is the main focus of this work.

Schagrin & Rescher (2013:42) defines formal fallacies on the one hand as deductively invalid arguments that typically commit an easily recognisable logical error and informal fallacies on the other hand as defects or errors in reasoning which can be identified by analysing the actual content of the argument rather than the structure. In other words, Formal fallacies are fallacies that may be detected through mere inspection of the form or structure of the argument. These fallacies are usually found only in deductive arguments that have clearly recognizable forms: A deductive argument is an argument in which the premise(s) is/are claimed to support the conclusion in such a way that it is impossible for the premise(s) to be true and the conclusion false and an inductive argument involves the assertion only that their (inductive arguments) premise(s) provide 'some' grounds for their conclusions (Hurley 2011:112). In a deductive argument, the conclusion is claimed to follow necessarily from the premise(s). Since every good argument provides a justification for accepting its conclusion, an argument that does not have a clearly recognizable form, commits some form(s) of a formal fallacy (Schagrin & Rescher 2013:43). Because these types of fallacies have to do with the form of arguments, they are restricted to deductive arguments. Formal fallacies are, thus, better discussed and understood in deductive logic which does not form part of the scope of this research.

A couple of quick examples, however, will help throw some light on them – informal fallacies:

If p then q; q; therefore, p (where p and q are propositional variables). If you are a logician (p), then you are wise (q). You are wise (q). Therefore, you are a logician (p). This argument is obviously invalid and fallacious. The conclusion may be false even if the premises were true. Being a logician (p) was never claimed as the only necessary and sufficient conditions for being wise – There are or could be lots of wise people who are not logicians. This is what is referred to in logic as the fallacy of affirming the consequent or converse error (Harrison III 1992:96). This example resembles its 'twin' – fallacy of denying the antecedent (or inverse error): If p then q; not p; therefore, not q. For instance, If I have (own) a car, then I am rich. I don't have (own) a car. Therefore, I am not rich. This argument is invalid because the premises do not imply (and or claim) that the only means (way) of being rich is to have (own) a car (Harrison III 1992:96). Another example of fornal fallacy which is drawn from syllogistic logic is:

All lions are animals

All mammals are animals

Therefore, all lions are mammals

Assuming   A= lions;   B= animals and C= mammals; we have:

If All A are B

And if All C are B

Therefore All A are C

For formally trained logicians, a mere inspection of the argument above, can inform one that the argument is invalid because the middle term *animals* is undistributed. Any such

argument commits the fallacy of undistributed middle. If, in logic, a certain term (statement) is distributed in a given argument, it simply means that the term says something about every member of the class (premise) that the term denotes. As in example, All A are B and All C are B. This simply means given that you are either A or C, then you are a B. But it is not the case that, given that you are a B, then you are either A or C. The middle term of the argument above is the term that appears in both premises but does not appear in the conclusion. So, it could be seen in the example above that all the elements of A and C could be found in B (the middle term), But not all the members (elements) of B can be found in either A or C. Surely, All A are B does not mean that All B are A and the same applies to All C are B. So, whereas both A and C are distributed; that is, they say something about all the members of B, B is undistributed. If a term is undistributed, the proposition (term) does not say something about every member of the class.

Informal fallacies, which is the focus of this work, are fallacies that can be detected through analysis of the content of the argument (or content of discourses). Informal fallacies take many forms and are widespread in everyday discourse. Very often they involve bringing irrelevant information into an argument or a discourse, wrong use of language or they are based on assumptions that, when examined, prove to be incorrect – informal fallacies are more dependent on misuse of language and of evidence (Michalos 1976:35). This research has adopted this definition, Michalos' definition, of informal fallacies as this definition sits very well with informal fallacies in socio-political discourses discussed in this work (research). Since the focus of this chapter is informal logic in general and informal fallacies in particular, we shall limit ourselves, for now, to explaining

informal fallacies further and stating which types (of informal fallacies) ubiquitously appear in socio-political discourses.

In Aristotle's, and recall Aristotle plays a pivotal role in logic as the father of logic, *Sophistical Refutations*, (Latin: *De Sophisticis Elenchis),* he (Aristotle) identified thirteen (13) types of informal fallacies and classified them into those dependent on language and those outside language (Hamblin 1970:13). He (Aristotle) is credited with laying the foundation of logic, both formal and informal – developing categorical and syllogistic logic, fallacies. etc (Salmon 1984:64). Even so, in Fischer (1979:55) a list of more than 100 fallacies has been developed. There is thus no precisely exact number of (informal) fallacies.

It must be noted that most often than not by the mere mention of logic, fallacies, inductive and deductive reasoning, most people, including scholars, assume the discussion has been taken to an abstract dimension. However, it will be argued here that these are everyday principles, used in our speeches and arguments. We have selected, from over one hundred possible informal fallacies, those that frequently appear in socio-political discourses for explanation. This selection is informed by how the available literature on the subject – from Hurley (2003 & 2011) to Hamblin (1970); from Thompson (2002) to Layman (1998); from Copi & Cohen (1990 & 1998) to Adler (1994); from Ade-Ali (2003) to Uduma (2008); from Quine (2001) to Harrison III (1992); from Salmon (1984) to Poste (1987); from Capaldi (1973) to Engel (1994); from Farnside & Holther (1959) to Fischer (1978); from Johnson (1989) to Johnson & Blair (1994); from Michalos (1976) to Kahane (1992); from Walton (1984) to Schagrin & Rescher (2013) and a host of other scholars in the field – have grouped these informal fallacies. We have adopted these

groupings as we hold, they (the groupings) constitute the most well-organized way of discussing fallacies in the area chosen – socio-political discourses.

2.3 Common grouping of informal fallacies

The fallacies discussed in this research are grouped into five main types – borrowing this grouping from Hurley, Copi & Cohen, Uduma, and other modern logicians (Hurley 2003:113), (Copi & Cohen 1998:162), (Uduma 2008:168) – viz: fallacies of relevance; fallacies of weak induction; fallacies of weak analogy; fallacies of presumption; and fallacies of ambiguity.

2.3.1 Fallacies of relevance

Let us begin with the fallacies of relevance. Fallacies of relevance, as the name suggests, are informal fallacies with premises which are logically irrelevant to the conclusion (Hurley 2003:114). There are two major causes of fallacies of relevance: the use of emotional appeals as evidence and introducing evidence that shifts focus away from the thesis being considered (Uduma 2008:193). However emotional evidence is said to be dangerous for two reasons: it is unstable and it is subjective. These fallacies are also known as material fallacies (Layman 1998:166). These are fallacies which depend, for their appeal, upon mistakes concerning the truth by the premise(s) or the possibility of such truth being known. Stated differently, material fallacies or fallacies of relevance refer to arguments that fail to prove the material truth of that being argued about; the premise(s) of such arguments is/are logically immaterial or irrelevant to, and therefore, incapable of establishing the truth of the conclusion (Uduma 2008:196). And the key words here are

very instructive: *fail to prove the material truth, incapable of establishing the truth of the conclusion*. There are several material fallacies or fallacies of relevance that are committed in our everyday exchange of ideas, newspaper editorials, political, social and religious speeches, advertisements, social media sites and letters to editors among many others but we shall consider the following:

Appeal to pity (*argumentum ad misericordiam*)

The appeal to pity fallacy is one of the most frequently committed fallacies in socio-political discourses, probably because of its power to strategically play on the emotions of victims. Hurley (2011:116) asserts that an arguer commits the appeal to pity fallacy when he or she tries to support a conclusion by merely evoking pity (emotional feeling) from the reader or listener. The arguer details the unfortunate consequences and circumstances that the subject is facing or would be faced with, to convince a listener to support a particular conclusion. For instance, the quote below is a reaction from a lawyer, Lawyer Yaw Boafo in connection with a court case against Mr. Kwesi Nyantakyi (a former President of Ghana Football Association) of peddling falsehood and defrauding by false pretense.

Lawyer Yaw Boafo in defense of Nyantakyi: "you have a Ghanaian who has risen through the ranks to become an executive committee member of FIFA and the first vice-president of CAF, what at all will we gain if we push him out? What is the guarantee that the next person who will come after him will be a Ghanaian … Doc, we stand a great deal of losing as a nation if we force him [Kwesi Nyantakyi] to resign" (Yaw Boafo, https://www.ghanaweb.com. May 29, 2018).

From the above, the conclusion Lawyer Yaw Boafo tries to draw is ''Nyantakyi should not be forced to resign''. His reason being that: Nyantakyi has attained a very prominent position in the football world; an unprecedented position ever held by a Ghanaian thus making him resign would cause the nation a great deal. However, it must be noted that the premises used are irrelevant to the conclusion. The subject is being asked to resign based on the charges leveled against him. The arguer forfeits tackling the major issue by attempts to invoke the emotions of Ghanaians. This is an attempt to make the listener agree to a conclusion, which lacks the necessary support from the premises.

Argument against the person (*argumentum ad hominem*)

This argument is also known as the fallacy of personal abuse, personal attack, damning the source, name calling, refutation by caricature, against the person, against the person and abusive fallacy (Walton 1998:68). This is a fallacious argumentative strategy whereby one arguer avoids the substance of the discussion by attacking the character, personality, and attribute of the other arguer. This fallacy is committed when two persons or groups engage in an argument. An argument against the person occurs in three forms: *ad hominem, abusive; ad hominem, circumstantial; and tu quoque (you too)* (Hurley 2003:118).

***Ad hominem*, abusive**

This fallacy, as its name suggests, involves the verbal abuse of an arguer by an opponent instead of putting forth a good counter argument. These abuses come in various forms: blunt, subtle, direct and coded. Imagine legislators debating whether capital punishment should be prohibited. The congresswoman from the ninth district

argues for laws prohibiting capital punishment because there is no clear evidence that capital punishment reduces the crime rate while there is clear evidence that capital punishment is cruel and unusual punishment often unevenly handed out by the courts. The representative from the fifth district has a different view, however. Supporting capital punishment, he says, "the congresswoman from the ninth district suggests that we ought to pass laws prohibiting capital punishment. She talks about cruelty. Well, that's the sort of thing we can expect from an impractical and soft-hearted grandmother. I tell you; her position is both wrong and dangerous" (Harrison III 1992:508). The abuse in this example (quote) is seen in the words the representative from the fifth district uses on his colleague congresswoman.

Ad hominem, circumstantial

This fallacy is also known as appeal to motive, appeal to personal interest, argument from motives, conflict of interest, faulty motives, and naïve cynicism, questioning motives or vested interest (Uduma 2008:195). According to Hurley (2011:116), *ad hominem* circumstantial is committed when a respondent attempts to discredit the opponent's argument by alluding to certain circumstances that affect the opponent. The arguer points out certain circumstances that make it likely for their opponent to hold on to a particular position, and uses that to discredit the opponent's argument.

Example:

…he (Mahama) has failed Ghanaians and that is why Ghanaians rejected him as a president. He cannot use galamsey at this time thinking he will come back to power (Amewu, https://www.pulse.com.gh. April 29, 2018).

This is a comment by John Peter Amewu (Ghana's Minister for Lands and Natural Resources), in a Citi News (a local Radio Station) interview in response to Ghana's ex-president Mahama's comment that the current government should stop chasing illegal miners, with soldiers, noting that the use of the military will not solve the problem. From the above, the speaker did not tackle the issue at hand but resorted to directing the listener's attention to what his opponent sought to gain from the use of such arguments.

Tu quoque (you too)

This is also known as the "you too" or "appeal to hypocrisy" argument. It often occurs when a person is attacked for doing what they are arguing against. *Tu quoque* is committed when an arguer simply cites a behaviour, speech or vice of an opponent which contradicts the latter's conclusion (Hurley 2011:117). Example:

Ghana is at 81 on this year's Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, while Nigeria is at 148. My question to President Buhari is this: how can you help a nation that is less corrupt than yours to fight corruption? It's like a demon offering to deliver a pastor! (Omokri, https://www.informationnigeria.com. March 8, 2018)

The above is a reaction from a social media user, Reno Omokri, captured by *Informationnigeria.com* (March 8, 2018). This is in response to Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari's, assertion that he would collaborate with Ghanaians to fight

corruption in Ghana. Reno downplayed Buhari's call for a collective and collaborative effort to fight against corruption but rather placed emphasis on the corruption happening in Nigeria under Buhari's leadership. Whether Buhari is corrupt or not has got nothing to do with the argument that a collaborative effort is needed to fight corruption everywhere in the world. The main aim of *tu quoque* is to put the first arguer into a bad light, as a means to discredit their argument.

Appeal to force (*argumentum ad baculum*)

This form of argument is also known as the argument to the cudgel, truncheon, baton or appeal to the stick. According to Jason (1987:44), this fallacy occurs when force, coercion, or even a threat of force is used directly or indirectly in place of reason, in an attempt to justify a conclusion. It involves the use of either psychological and/or physical threat to ensure the acceptance of a conclusion. Logically, these threats are uncalled for; a logically sound argument carries its own force of persuasion, using the tools of logic. Take for example; Child to playmate: "Teletubbies" is the best show on TV, and if you don't believe it, I'm going to call my big brother over here and he's going to beat you up (Hurley 2003:114). Here, the child threatens the playmate to accept "Teletubbies" is the best show on TV or reject that and get beaten by the big brother (the child's big brother).

Appeal to the masses (*argumentum ad Populum*)

The appeal to the masses fallacy is a specific type of informal fallacy that assumes that a proposition or claim is true insofar as the majority of the people believe it to be so. It also plays on the emotion and desires of people to get them to accept a particular conclusion or engage in a particular activity (Harrison III 1992:494). It is also

referred to as appeal to the people. According to Hurley (2011:118), the appeal to the masses fallacy comes in two ways; the direct approach and the indirect approach. The direct approach often occurs when an arguer attempts to excite the feelings and enthusiasms of the majority in order to get them to assent his/her conclusion. This fallacy is mostly seen in the speeches of propagandists and revolutionists and is often meant to arouse a mob mentality. That is why it is sometimes referred to as appeal to mob. On the other hand, the indirect approach occurs when an arguer often addresses one or a few individuals by capitalizing on their individual's relationship with the crowd. It is mostly used by advertising companies to market their products. The indirect approach is sub-categorized into three parts; the bandwagon argument, appeal to vanity and the appeal to snobbery. Example: Yes, I cheated on my chemistry quiz. But I shouldn't be punished for that. What's wrong with cheating? That's the way most students get their grades in this school (Harrison III 1992:494). The student is arguing that he/she should not be punished. However, to support his/her position, the only evidence he/she gives is that most students do; in fact, cheat. So, it's not wrong for him/her to cheat. His/her position is not good enough to warrant cheating in examination.

Another type or form of the indirect approach of appeal to the masses is the bandwagon fallacy. The bandwagon fallacy comes from the phrase "jump on the bandwagon" or "climb on the bandwagon" (Engel, 1994:86). The argument appeals to popularity or the fact that many people are doing a particular thing as an attempted validation. It simply plays on an individual's desire to be accepted, loved or respected rather than appealing to a logically relevant reason. Example: George Bush must be a

superior military leader since that is what everybody is saying. Obviously, the fact that everybody is claimed to be saying something does not make what they are saying true.

The next indirect approach to the appeal to the masses fallacy is termed as "appeal to vanity" (Uduma 2008:222). The fallacy is most often associated with celebrities or people who are admired and imitated. It holds that if you want to be like this person or celebrity, then you should have or do a particular thing that they have or do. They are mostly seen in advertisements with elaborate graphics and sounds. For instance, a perfume would be marketed with a celebrity's image on it showing that he or she uses that particular perfume and therefore should be used by others.

Unlike the bandwagon fallacy that often appeals to an individual's desire to be like everyone else, the other form of indirect appeal, the appeal to snobbery fallacy, capitalizes on the individual's desire to stand out from the crowd and be unique. It often exploits the desire of individuals to be raised to a higher class or gain a prestigious position among the many. Everybody wants to feel important or special and this is exactly what the snob appeal takes advantage of.

The straw man fallacy

Johnson and Blair (1983:71) defines the straw man fallacy as a fallacy committed "... when an individual misrepresents his/her opponent's position, attribute to that person a point of view with a set-up implausibility that you can easily demolish, then proceed to argue against the set-up version as though it were the opponent's position." The straw man fallacy is a type of informal fallacy that is committed when an individual distorts the argument of his/her opponent and then develops a new one and based on that, concludes

that he has won the argument. In other words, it occurs when someone misrepresents an argument, a theory or claim and proceeds to demolish or refute the misrepresented claim or argument. The straw man argument is very popular in real-life argumentation. Therefore, for one to detect the straw man fallacy, one must know and be able to prove that an arguer's position has been misrepresented in every given case. To do this, one must interpret what one's opponent means to say and determine what their real position is on that issue.

Missing the point fallacy (*ignoratio elenchi*)

This argument is also known as the irrelevant conclusion argument. Hurley (2003:123) asserts that this fallacy occurs when the premise of an argument supports one particular conclusion, but then a different conclusion, often vaguely related to the correct conclusion, is drawn. Stated differently, one commits this fallacy when one uses a set of premises that leads to conclusion X, yet draws conclusion Y from the set of premises. The arguer presents very good premises which would lead to a perfectly valid and sound conclusion, yet states a conclusion irrelevant to the premises. Example, you say you object to the American foreign policy in Europe. You ought to become a citizen of Bosnia then. The conclusion of this argument deviates from the premise – it (the conclusion) misses the point.

Red herring

To divert hounds from pursuing a scent, a herring would be dragged across their path. The hounds, distracted by this new scent, would follow the scent of the herring and would forget about their original goal. From this practice comes the expression "a red

herring" (Harrison III 1992:507). A red herring fallacy is committed when an arguer either intentionally or unintentionally creates a diversion in an argument by changing the subject being discussed to a subtly related one. The arguer then proceeds to draw a conclusion on this new topic. In using this form of strategy in an argument, arguers often change the topic to an eye-catching topic such as issues related to sex, crime, entertainment, sports and death among others (Hurley 2003:124). Listeners or participants in the discussion often go after the red herring and forget about what they were initially talking about. It must be noted here that the topic of diversion has no link at all with the thesis of the argument. The importance of this is that most often than not arguments that commit red herring fallacy are confused with arguments that commit straw man fallacy. The difference is that straw man deals with a distortion of an opponent's argument while red herring completely ignores the opponent's argument.

2.3.2 Fallacies of weak induction

Having tackled fallacies of relevance, we now consider fallacies of weak induction. What are fallacies of weak induction? Unlike fallacies of relevance, fallacies of weak induction are not committed because the premises are irrelevant to the conclusion; they are committed when the premises are not strong enough to justify the conclusion (Layman 1998:176). The emphasis here is derived from the name "weak": the premise(s) is/are in connection with the conclusion but the connection is loose or weak. Hurley (2003:130) observes that just like fallacies of relevance, fallacies of weak induction often involve emotional grounds for believing a conclusion. Below is a brief but concise description of some fallacies of weak induction:

Appeal to irrelevant/false authority (*argumentum verecundium*)

The term Verecundiam first appeared in John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690).* It is a Latin phrase – *ad verecundiam* – which means *appeal to modesty*. Even so, it is logically referred to as appeal to authority. The appeal to irrelevant authority fallacy is committed when an authority that an arguer makes reference to is irrelevant to the argument or lacks credibility ((Uduma 2008:209). There may be various reasons that make that particular authority irrelevant to the discussion. These include being biased, personal interest, lack of expertise, credibility among others. In trying to detect if one has committed the fallacy of appeal to false authority, one must be very careful for various reasons. Firstly, the authority in question might be relevant in a wide range of issues or diverse sectors but not relevant in the issue being discussed or argued. Again, there are some areas where no individual can claim knowledge of and, then, there are some areas where only one person can be an authority such as when talking about one's personal feeling and emotions. Example: if you want to know whether the budget deficit of countries today is a serious problem or not, just bear this in mind; leading public figures like Jacob Zuma of South Africa (former president of South Africa), Jose Mourinho (that famous football coach), Celine Dion (a celebrated musician) and a host of celebrities have all maintained the seriousness of budget deficit of countries in the world today. The problem with this form of reasoning is that, all the names cited may be very qualified in their various professions but may not be qualified in budget analyses issues.

Appeal to ignorance (*argumentum ad ignorantiam*)

The appeal to ignorance fallacy occurs when the arguer assumes that a particular proposition is true or false because it has not been proved otherwise (Harrison III 1992:497). It takes different shapes; "you cannot prove your claim; therefore, your claim is false", "you cannot disprove my claim therefore my claim is right" among others. The appeal to ignorance fallacy is sometimes referred to as the 'argument from lack of imagination or proof' (Harrison III 1992:497). For instance, Castro's (a Ghanaian Hiplife musician) father claimed that the report of the police on his son's death after two years is not true.

Mr. Eshun: I have absolute belief that he will soon come home. There is no evidence that tells me I cannot see him. Where is the life jacket he was wearing? Have you ever heard that somebody has discovered the life jacket? Since there is no proof that my son has passed on, it is not true that he is dead. Nothing will make me lose hope" (Eshun, https://www.livefmnews.com. 10th October, 2016).

The arguer assumes that his son is alive because there is no proof that shows his death. Two years after the incidence (where Castro is said to have drowned in the White Volta in Ghana), the father still thinks that Castro must be alive because nobody has been able to find his son's body, nor the jacket he was wearing. Meanwhile, the fact that there is no proof does not mean that he is alive. In fact, there are a lot of people who have lost their lives on similar occasions and their bodies were not found.

Hasty generalization

This fallacy is also known as converse accident, insufficient statistics, argument by generalization, faulty generalization, hasty induction, inductive generalization, insufficient sample, lonely fact fallacy, over generality, or overgeneralization. This form of fallacy pertains only to inductive reasoning or arguments. In this argument the premise(s) comprise(s) only few instances; however, the conclusion is a generalization of these instances (Copi & Cohen 1998:171). The instances provided are not adequate enough to serve as basis for generalization. This fallacy involves drawing a conclusion based on a small sample size, rather than looking at statistics that are much more in line with the typical or average situation. Uduma (2008:288), however, admonishes that the mere fact that a sample may be small, does not necessarily mean that it would lead to hasty generalization. On the other hand, the fact that the sample size is large does not make it immune to the fallacy of hasty generalization. It would depend on other factors, ratio of sample size with generalization size among many others. Most arguments that commit the fallacy of hasty generalization would follow the logical scheme below:

Sample S is taken from entity P.

Sample S is a very small part of entity P.

Conclusion C is drawn from sample S and applied to entity P (Layman 1998:134).

Slippery slope

A slippery slope fallacy is a type of informal fallacy that occurs when an argument presents a series or chain of reaction that eventually leads to a disastrous or undesirable

result (Harrison III 1992:521). Corner et al (2011:135 quoted in Walton, 2015) identified four characteristics that are common to all slippery slope arguments; (1) an initial proposal for action, (2) an undesirable outcome, (3) a belief that allowing the action will lead to a reevaluation of the undesirable outcome in the future, and (4) the rejection of the initial action proposed, based on this belief. Slippery slope arguments often share some semblance with the argument from negative consequences (Walton, 2015:102). Most slippery slope fallacies stem from emotional conviction(s) of the arguer that a particular action or policy is bad and therefore must be stopped (Hurley, 2003:138). In justifying his conviction or position, the arguer often presents subtle evidences or support. Example: You should never gamble. Once you start gambling you'll find it difficult to stop. Soon you are spending all your money on gambling, and eventually you will turn to crime to support your earnings. In this example, it is evident that there is no direct link between the premises and the supposed conclusion: We have no reason to believe that the chain reaction provided will actually take place.

False cause

This fallacy is committed when the conclusion of an argument depends on a supposed causal connection that probably does not exist and even if it does exist, we have no way of linking the possible outcome of the effect, to the said cause (Layman 1998:179).

Stated differently, the false cause fallacy is committed when an arguer attempts to establish a causal connection between a premise and conclusion which connection does not necessarily and sufficiently exist. It involves assuming that because two things

happened concurrently, the first caused the second one. To be able to claim that an arguer has committed the fallacy of false cause one must be able to clearly state the particular supposition upon which the arguer makes his claim and also be able to point out the lack of causal connection between the supposed premise(s) and conclusion. There are four varieties of the false cause fallacy: *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, *non causa pro causa*, *oversimplified cause and gambler's fallacy* (Uduma 2008:289).

Post hoc ergo propter hoc

Post hoc ergo propter hoc is a Latin name which literally interprets as "after this, therefore because of this." It is simply shortened as the post hoc fallacy. It works on the assumption that since event Y followed event X, event Y must have been caused by event X. This fallacy is committed when mere temporal successions are held to be causally related. The arguer in this form of fallacy tries to draw a necessary connection between two things which are mere temporal successions and may not have any link whatsoever (Uduma 2008:290).

Non causa pro causa fallacy is another variety of false cause. Hurley (2011:135) claims it is based on a mistake rather than temporal succession. The phrase "*non causa pro causa*" is a Latin phrase that means "not the cause for the cause," The fallacy is generally shortened as "non causa." The argument offers an explanation that confuses correlation with causality. Oversimplified cause is another variety of the false cause argument. It occurs when a contributing factor is assumed to be the only cause of an effect. Put differently, this fallacy is committed when an arguer points just a cause out of the multitude and presents it as the sole cause of an event. That is to say, this fallacy is

committed when a multitude of causes combine to produce an effect, and one of them is treated as if it were the only cause (Hurley 2011:115). Example:

Edward Frimpong: Therefore, I would like to state it emphatically that the recent rise in the school dropout rate, teenage pregnancy, rape, the use of narcotic drugs, violent students' demonstrations, occultism and fornication are the results of violent and vulgar films shown on our television screens (Ade-Ali 2003:25).

In the example above, the arguer attributes the entire vices among students to the watching of television. However, these vices among students can stem from a whole lot of factors including lack of discipline at home and at school and the society that the student finds himself or herself in. Watching of television shows that have violent and vulgar contents is just one of the many factors responsible for vices among the youths. Usually, oversimplified fallacies are committed when the arguer seeks a self-interest or glory, where the simplified conclusion drawn is in favour of the arguer. The last type of the false cause fallacy to be discussed here is the gamblers fallacy. This fallacy is also known as the *Monte Carlo fallacy* or *the fallacy of the maturity of chances* (Uduma 2008:290-291). Hurley (2011:165) describes it to be a fallacy committed whenever the conclusion of an argument depends on the supposition that independent events in a game of chances are causally related. This occurs when one reasons that, previous outcomes in a game of chance determine future outcomes of that same game (Uduma 2008:291). In other words, this fallacy occurs when an arguer supposes that events in a game of chance are causally related when in fact they are not. Example: Kobby has never won a National Lottery Game before. Therefore, he will certainly not win in the next round.

Since one round of a National Lottery Game has no influence on the next (and no evidence is available to prove otherwise), it is no more likely that Kobby will not win the next than it was in the other rounds (the previous rounds).

2.3.3 Fallacies of weak analogy

These fallacies are also known as fallacies of *bad* analogy, false analogy, faulty analogy, questionable analogy, arguments from spurious similarity and false metaphor. Weak analogy occurs when a person draws a comparison between two concepts, situations, or things and draws a conclusion from same, even though the connection between the two is not strong enough to warrant that case (Uduma 2008:254). The arguer tries to analyze two things. He or she begins by providing the similarity that exists between both entities, however in his or her conclusion the arguer gives a property that was only peculiar to one (A) to the other (B) on the assumption that based on the number of commonalities, it is likely the other (B) would also possess same. Hurley (2011:140) asserts that to evaluate such arguments one has to follow two neccessary steps: Firstly, determine the attributes that the two entities compared have in common; secondly, determine how the conclusion, say Z, is related to the attributes similar to both. If the conclusion Z is causally connected to the similarities between both, then it is strong, however; if it is not, then it is weak. Fallacies of weak analogy come in this logical form:

X is like Y.

Y has property P.

Therefore, X has property P.

2.3.4 Fallacies of presumption

The next set of fallacies to be tackled are fallacies of presumption. Fallacies of presumption occur when an argument contains premises which presume what they (the premises) purport to prove, or when an unwarranted assumption is used to draw a conclusion (Uduma 2008 :258). In this work, the ubiquitous types of fallacies of presumption that are discussed include False Dilemma (or false dichotomy), Begging the question, suppressed evidence, composition, division, and complex question.

False dilemma/ false dichotomy/ deceptive alternatives

The false dilemma fallacy is a type of fallacy that is often committed when two alternatives are presented as the only possibilities. The arguer normally presents a limited number of alternatives (usually two) in a disjunctive form (either…or) in a way that one is compelled to accept the conclusion drawn. That is to say, this fallacy occurs when a disjunctive premise incorrectly suggests, explicitly or implicitly, that the alternatives mentioned (or given/provided) by the disjunction are mutually exclusive and exhaust all possible alternatives relevant to the conclusion (Harrison III 1992:515). The options are usually put into "desirable and undesirable" forms. The arguer then rules out the undesirable option, leaving the desirable alternative as the conclusion. Example: Either I stay at the east or the west, otherwise, there is no place for me to stay in the world. This obviously is false dilemma or dichotomy because one could still stay at yet either the north or the south. That is to say, there are or could be other equally good alternatives one could pick from but the arguer conceals them.

Begging the question

This fallacy is known in Latin as '*petitio principii'* which means 'request for source'. This is also known as: *assuming the initial point, assuming the answer, chicken and the egg argument, circulus in probando, circular reasoning, and vicious circle.* This fallacy is committed when an arguer omits a key premise in an argument but manages to draw a conclusion still (Hamblin 1970:33). In these arguments, a conclusion is drawn based on an unmentioned premise or based on the illusion that the listener or reader is already aware of that premise. Hurley (2003:147) defines it to be an argument in which inadequate premises are assumed to provide adequate support for the conclusion. This fallacy occurs in three forms: omitting key premise(s), restating the conclusion as a premise or by reasoning in a circle (Uduma 2008:257). Example: If one reasons as – Take your same-sex marriage away, we are much civilized.

The above example begs the question. Does the mere fact that you do not entertain same-sex make you more civilized? From the above, something has been omitted from the argument. The statement has failed to provide the link between same-sex marriage and being civilised.

Suppressed evidence

The fallacy of suppressed evidence is also known as *ignoring inconvenient data, cherry picking*, *fallacy of incomplete evidence, argument by selective observation, argument by half-truth*, *card stacking, and fallacy of exclusion, ignoring the counter evidence, one-sided assessment*, *slanting or one-sidedness* (Hurley 2003:153). From the above names of this fallacy, one gets a gist of how it is committed. The ultimate condition

for a premise to be true is for it to entail all necessary evidence needed to make the conclusion rightly inferred. An argument and or discourse which omits such evidence commits therefore the fallacy of suppressed evidence (Uduma 2008:264). Put in simpler terms, it occurs when an arguer selects evidence to persuade the audience to accept a position, and withholds evidence that would go against that position. This fallacy is very common in the advertisement industries, where only positive aspects of products or services are highlighted, ignoring the weaknesses or disadvantages or side effects of using the products. It is also common in the political circle, and a very effective form of propaganda. Below is the nature of most cases of suppressed evidence.

Evidence A and evidence B are available.

Evidence A supports the claim of person 1.

Evidence B supports the counterclaim of person 2.

Therefore, person 1 presents only evidence A.

This fallacy is committed when an arguer ignores important evidence that requires a different conclusion. In this fallacy, future occurrences are usually not taken into account (Uduma 2008:265).

Example: Kobby: In Economics class today, we studied life occupations

Ann: I never would have guessed it

Kobby: Based on those figures, typewriter repairers should earn lots of money for years to come

Ann: Maybe you should drop out of school and become a typewriter repairer.

Kobby: Maybe I should. I hate being poor.

Note: Kobby argues that because typewriter repairers have earned a good living in the past, they should continue to earn a good living in the future.

What Kobby ignores is that computers have, almost, completely replaced typewriters in recent years. Kobby's arguments follow: typewriter repairers have earned good living in the past. Therefore, typewriter repairers will earn good living in the future. This obviously suppresses evidence – future events are unknown.

Composition

Hurley (2003:158) asserts that the fallacy of composition is committed when the conclusion of an argument depends on the erroneous transfer of an attribute from parts of something onto the whole. Put differently, it involves inferring that something is true of the whole from the fact that it is true of some parts of the whole. This is the opposite of the fallacy of division. Logical scheme:

A is a part of B.

A has property X.

Therefore, B has property X.

Examples:

1. Each player in this current Kumasi Asante Kotoko team is an excellent player. Therefore, this current Kumasi Asante Kototo team is an excellent team.

2. Sodium and Chlorine, the elements of salt, are both deadly poisons. Thus, salt is a deadly poison.

It should be noted that in both arguments above, the attributes, features, characteristics, etc. that are transferred from the individual parts to the whole are designated by the expressions "excellent" and "deadly poisons" respectively. In each case, one can observe that the transfer from parts onto the whole is illegitimate, and so the arguments commit a fallacy – fallacy of composition.

Division

This fallacy is the exact opposite of composition. The fallacy of division arises when one infers that something is true of the part from the fact that it is true of the whole. This occurs when one mistakenly or deliberately confers an attribute of a bigger body or the whole to the part, assuming they would be of the same properties. Thus, this fallacy arises when one reasons or argues from the properties of a whole to the properties of the constituent parts of that whole – what is true of a whole must also be true of its constituent parts – and no justification exists for such conclusion (Hurley 2003:160) .

Examples: 1. African leaders are utterly corrupt. You are an African leader; hence you're corrupt (you must be corrupt).

2. Salt is not a deadly poisonous substance. Thus, its constituent parts – sodium and chlorine – are not deadly poisonous elements (Hurley 2003:160).

Again, in the examples above, there are illegitimate transfers of characteristics from the whole to respective constituent parts

Complex question (*plurium interrogationum*)

This fallacy occurs when a single question that is really pregnant in meaning (two or more questions in one) is asked and a single answer is then applied to both or all the possible meanings. This is to say, this fallacy consists of questions that require a "yes or no" answer but which questions really imply some form of assumption(s) (Copi & Cohen 1998:183).

Eg. Have you stopped using drug enhancing substances for learning?

Note that this example asks more than one question – Did you use drug enhancing substances to learn? And if you did, have you stopped using any such substances? Etc.

Accent

This fallacy occurs when a premise relies, for its apparent meaning, on one possible emphasis, but a conclusion is drawn from it that relies on the meaning of the same words accented (used) differently. This fallacy may also occur by quoting one (an arguer) out of context. Stated differently, this fallacy arises from the confusion of words which are spelt alike but differ in spoken accentuation (Hamblin 1970:22). If for our mistake, in quoting another person, we italicize a word which he has not italicized, or leave out words in the quotation or its immediate context, we commit the fallacy of accent. Examples include:

1. We should not speak ill of our friends.

This is fallacious, because when it is read without any undue stresses, then the point is clearly made; however, if one should stress meaning in the above claim, then one can conclude that "we can feel free to speak ill of someone (and or people) who is (are) not our friend(s).

2. 'Nothing is too good' for her is another example. This is fallacious because it could be interpreted both as an expression of highest esteem and its opposite depending on whether the emphasis is on "Nothing" or "too good".

Accident

This fallacy occurs when an arguer applies a general rule to a specific case that was not intended to fit – general rule misapplies to specific case.

Example: Conversation: Kobby: Hey Ann! Fifteen of us are going to barge into Fanta's room and throw a party.

Ann: But Fanta is studying! You've no right to do that!

Kobby: Nonsense! The Bill of Right guarantees us the right to assemble as we choose!

In this conversation, Kobby argues that the Bill of Right guarantees freedom of assemble. Thus, he and his friends have a right to throw a party in Fanta's room. Kobby's argument commits the fallacy of accident because the Bill of Right (which he applies) does not apply to assemblies in private rooms (Hurley 2003:121). Another example is: The right to possess property is fundamental. If, then, I should want to purchase an automatic weapon for my own use. I should be allowed to do so. This is fallacious becauase the right to

possess property does not include and or allow individuals to own automatic weapons for personal use. This can create a chaotic society if all individuals decided to acquire automatic weapons for their personal use, damning the quencequences whatsoever.

2.3.5 Fallacies of ambiguity

As the name implies, the fallacies of ambiguity refer to an error in reasoning due to unclear or imprecise use of language. It often arises because of confusion in the meanings of words or in the handling of an idea (Harrison III 1992:485). The arguer normally makes use of a word, a phrase or a sentence that has two or more possible meanings or an event has more than one interpretation. In this case, the listener may or may not realize that more than one interpretation is possible, so he may arbitrarily have to select one of the possible choices. This lack of clarity may lead to misinterpretation of an idea and unwarranted conclusion. The fallacies of ambiguity include; Equivocation and Amphiboly.

Equivocation

The fallacy of equivocation usually occurs when a word or a phrase is used in two or more different senses in an argument. Since the various meanings are not distinguished from each other, confusion emerges. This type of fallacy may be subtle and may cause considerable confusion. It may occur when the meaning of a word shifts during a discourse or an argument.

Example:

Any law can be repealed by the legislative authority. But the law of gravity is a law. Therefore, the law of gravity can be repealed by the legislative authority (Hurley 2003:155).

Here, the arguer equivocates on the word "law". The term, "law" appears in two different senses in the argument which renders the argument ambiguous and therefore fallacious. He mistakenly assumes that the law of gravity is a man-made law which can also be repealed like all man-made laws (Hurley 2003:155).

Amphiboly

The fallacy of amphiboly, also known as 'syntactic ambiguity', mostly occurs due to poor grammatical construction. The ambiguity arises from an error in syntax, word or phrase order or punctuation. It involves the use of dangling modifiers, ambiguous antecedent of a pronoun among others (Copi and Cohen 1998:193). These structures often create confusion of meanings to the listener and thereby result in unwarranted conclusion.

Example: John told Henry that he had made a mistake. It follows that John has at least the courage to admit his own mistakes. In this example, the pronoun, "he" has an ambiguous antecedent. It could either refer to John or Henry and this makes the argument not only ambiguous but also fallacious.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has afforded the reader a quick survey of ubiquitous informal fallacies that inescapably appear in arguments and everyday conversations in general and socio-political discourses in particular. The chapter established that logical fallacies, particularly informal fallacies, have more than just an abstract dimension and this could be seen in every day conversations. The fallacies discussed in this chapter, this research posits, are the ubiquitous ones that could be found in socio-political (and religious) discourses. The fallacies here have been (were) chosen carefully to suit the focus of this research. Scholars have always differed on whether fallacies have all the categorizations above or not. Those controversies fall outside the scope of this research. These fallacies have been discussed and adopted in this research because it is the position of this research that they (the fallacies discussed here) are those that frequently appear in socio-political discourses in Ghana. The proceeding chapters are detailed to discuss, thoroughly, informal fallacies as they appear in socio-political and religious discourses in Ghana.

Chapter Three

Some Common Informal fallacies in political discourses in Ghana

3.1   Introduction

It is common knowledge in critical thinking that when one makes a claim, they must back it with evidence. This is basic knowledge of argumentation. There are, however, cases where this evidence is bypassed, and an unjustified and incorrect assertion finds its way into our reasoning and or everyday discourses. The faulty argument which emerges from this way of reasoning is what is referred to as a fallacy, and has been discussed in our chapter two. In Ghana, such tactics of sneaking unwarranted assertions into people's line of reasoning is well displayed in everyday socio-political discourses. Let us introduce this chapter with the question, what is *political discourse*? The easiest, according to Dijk (1998b:2) and which this research agrees to, answer is that political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, viz., politicians. Indeed, the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels. Politicians in this sense are the group of people who are being paid for their (political) activities, and who are being elected or appointed (or self-designated) as the central players in the polity. The first observation that needs to be made about political discourse is that it is not a genre, but a class of genres defined by a social domain, namely that of politics (Van Dijk 1998b:2). Government deliberations, parliamentary debates, party programs, and speeches by politicians, are among the many genres that belong to the domain of politics. This work defines political discourse as a

form of persuasive-argumentation. Persuasive-argumentation is (I define in this work), the act of using words to incite people (and in this case, electorates) for purposes, solely, of achieving or winning political power. This definition, I believe, based on the political discourses sampled and discussed in this chapter, sits very well with political discourses that take place in Ghana. The fact that political-argumentation is open to all creates constraints. The things that fuel these constraints in political-argumentation in politics in general and politics in Ghana in particular include but not limited to open access to the media, different background of audience, lack of national agenda and absence of topical issues for debate by all political actors. To accommodate the diversity of their audiences, political arguers (actors) often employ ''condensation symbols'' (Sapir 1934) – visual or verbal symbols that ''condense'' a range of different meanings into a generally positive or negative connotation (Zarefsky 2008:324). It is this point that this research has defined such ways of political actors finding every means of convincing the electorates as persuasive-argumentation using, especially, informal fallacies. The examples that are analyzed here constitute types of the common informal fallacies discussed in chapter two of this work.

3.2 Political discourses, political-argumentations and political persuasions

Politicians argue for the adequacy of their future actions in response to explicit or anticipated criticism in which the quality of their political conduct is doubted (Andone 2015:3). The political actors inform (or, rather, misinform; my own insertion) their audience and explain the proposed measures, plan and policies they hope to execute when they come to power. In response to the politician's evaluation of his own future

actions, doubt is expressed by the account-holder (whom I call the electorate) because, the electorate in Ghana has never seen, at least since the inception of the fourth republic in Ghana (defined in Chapter one of this work), any politician (Presidents and parliamentarians alike) execute the plans they outline at political campaigns and or discourses. This gives rise to differences of opinion. In this way, a mixed difference of opinion is created in which the account-holders, electorates, criticize politicians by pointing out why certain of the politician's decisions, policies or measures are not correct (Andone 2015:5). One purpose of this is to help maintain democracy by helping citizens to hold public and office holders accountable for their position(s) of service (Andone 2015:7)

In trying to achieve their purpose, politicians use persuasive-argumentations to convince the electorates. In argumentative terms, this amounts to what Andone refers to as the employment of pragmatic arguments in which a recommendation to carry out a course of action is made. When prescribing a course of action by employing pragmatic arguments, politicians try to make their arguing (discourse) acceptable. In the first place, politicians attempt to show that the results they intend to achieve in these practices are adequate. An interesting question to investigate concerns the way in which politicians involved in accountability practices cover (using fallacies) weak aspects of their performance while emphasizing those aspects which are to their advantage (Andone 2015:16-17). This research has chosen to focus on one important aspect of public discourse, informal fallacies as they appear in political discourses, the Ghanaian example, as particularly sensitive to the effects of engaging in political discourses in Ghana. As this chapter discusses, where no common ethical and political standards are

at work, public discourse under conditions of political discourse, leads to a widespread recourse to slippery-slope arguments in particular (and fallacies in general; my own emphasis) (Ferretti and Rossi 2013:30). So, in a society (and by extension, a country) where citizens are deeply divided on their ideological positions (as opposed to a more homogenous community), it is more likely that slippery-slope arguments in particular and fallacies in general will be deployed and perhaps win the day (Ferretti and Rossi 2013:30).

Speeches (public speeches) are monologues addressed to a usually heterogeneous mass audience (Jorgensen 2014:158). Public discourse, therefore, involves argumentation and argumentations may involve fallacies. In this research, we agree with O' Keefe's definition that: ''Argumentation is the art of producing in the mind of another person acceptance of ideas held true by a writer or speaker, and of inducing the other person to make a decision, or, if necessary, to perform an act in consequence of his acquired belief'' (O'Keefe 2011:20). For present purposes, the notable feature of this definition is that argumentation is seen to have effects on mental states. ''Argumentation is the art of persuading others to think or act in a definite way. It includes all writing and speaking which is persuasive in form'' (O'Keefe 2011:20). Thus ''the object of argumentation is not only to induce others to accept our opinions and beliefs in regard to any disputed matter, but to induce them to act in accordance with our opinions and beliefs'' (O'Keefe 2011:20) – and in this situation, for political purposes, to vote for our ideas. Again, notice, argumentation is meant to have effects both on mental states (opinions and beliefs) and on behavior. ''Argumentation is the process of proving or disproving a proposition. Its purpose is to induce a new belief, to establish truth or combat error in the mind of another'' (O'Keefe 2011:20). O'Neill et al. (1917:1, from O'keefe

2011:21): "Argumentation is the art of influencing others, through the medium of reasoned discourse, to believe or act as we wish them to believe or act" (emphasis added). Rowley (1932, from O'keefe 2011:22), by 'persuasion' he means the process of moving the hearer's will through concurrent appeals to his understanding and his passions." Similarly, argumentative discourse has both a specific end (namely, influencing the understanding) and a specific means of achieving that end (namely, reasoned argument) (O'keefe 2011:23). Consider arousing feelings of pity. In Aristotle's treatment (in Book II of his Rhetoric; 322BC/2007, from O'keefe 2011:30) of various emotions relevant to rhetorical practice, he characterizes pity as (in part) "a certain pain at an apparently destructive or painful event happening to one who does not deserve it…" (1385b).

Following from the above, one can say that, argumentation is the use of crystal-clear thinking – logic – and evidence to convince a person to adopt a particular opinion. What is persuasion? If, while trying to prove their point, a person uses emotional language and dramatic appeals to beliefs and values, they are using persuasion" (Nettel 2011:56). It is within this context that this research sees persuasion, involving informal fallacies, as key to political-argumentations (persuasive-argumentations). Among the common types of persuasion in political discourses, which Zarafsky calls strategic maneuvering, are changing the subject, modifying the relevant audience, appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions (Zarefsky 2008:317). This chapter has put together examples of political discourses in Ghana and has analyzed informal fallacies inherent in these discourses, to reflect political-argumentation (political persuasion) in Ghana.

3.3   Political discourse and logical reasoning

In the discipline of Logic, as has been discussed in my previous chapter, scholars have formally defined an argument as a set of given propositions labeled as conclusion and premise(s). The conclusion is an assertion put forward whereas the premises are issued to justify or prove this conclusion (Epstein and Kernberger, 2006:5). This definition often proves difficult to maintain when it comes to real-life socio-political discourses. The problem with regarding an argument in this formal sense is that, as some logicians observe, it fails to do justice to the socio-political dimension of argumentation (Walton, 2008:1). The socio-political dimension of argumentation has laid down rules that dictate the proper conduct of dialogue whether for persuasion, negotiation or even disputes. These rules could be moral principles in communication, legal rules, among others.

The study of inference is of critical importance because its conduct and the influences on this conduct determine what meaning we make of life. If you infer either fallaciously or otherwise that functionaries of both the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana are corrupt, your decision to not work with them is based on this inference. The quality of your inferences affects your reasoning which externally affects your arguments. Hence, other than your actions, the only way for another person to infer (come to know) your line of reasoning is through your arguments (Groarke and Tindale 2004:144).

Inferences may be made in two known ways - deductively or inductively. Deductions are arguments whose conclusions are logically inferred from their premise(s) and inductions are arguments whose premise(s) provide only some support for their conclusion, as discussed in chapter two of this work (Walton 2008:137). An inductive

argument is termed weak when the probability involved in the conclusion is so low that its acceptance is a problem and strong if the support (from the premise or premises to the conclusion) is good enough to warrant the acceptance of the conclusion (Walton 2008:137). So, to claim, deductively, for example, that either you are reading this in the library right now or in your car deductively implies that you cannot be at both places right now.

When a deductive argument is unsuccessful, it is called a *non-sequitur* (literally meaning 'it does not follow') or an invalid argument (Walton 2008: 152). These unsuccessful arguments, however, have a pragmatic dimension and may be used to confuse, distract, delay, deceive, or generally, to place certain commitments upon your listeners – usually one they would autonomously decline (Eemeren and Grootendorst 1999:16).

There are certain rules – speaking to the issue at hand, respecting your audience and not taking them (your audience for granted) by sticking to facts as they are, etc. – which govern the proper conduct of dialogue (Walton 2008:15). Violating these rules is to commit what we call an informal fallacy. Thus, an informal fallacy is when you contravene the rules of reasoned dialogue and proceed to put forward a deceptive argument. Most important to note is that this deception is only attributable insofar as the argument is made based on faulty reasoning.

A well-orchestrated fallacy which contains a perfect admixture of emotional appeals and appeals to ignorance may prove unbelievably effective in moving people to action (Tindale 2006:3). Thus, informal fallacies have a pragmatic dimension. According to Tindale (2006:3), such fallacies are always issued with an intention to deceive. This

makes them dangerous in issues as delicate as choosing a president or whether to vote or not and in following a directive – political directive in this case. In Ghana today, almost every political speech is laced with fallacies, based on the explanation of fallacies in general and informal fallacies in particular given in this research so far. The ubiquitous among these fallacies include but not limited to, and as is the focus of this chapter, the following:

3.3.1 The appeal to pity fallacy

Recall that the appeal to pity as already explained in chapter 2, is a fallacy that makes an emotional appeal. Here, the arguer attempts to change the judgement on an issue by posing as a person deserving of mercy. This is an attempt to make a person override their reasonable – correctly inferred - conclusions and adopt unreasonably emotional ones. In court, mostly as a last resort, people appeal to pity (Walton 1995: 775).

Consider Mr. A. T. Nelson, a member of the Infamous Montie Three (three people arrested at a radio station called Montie Fm, in Accra, Ghana, for threatening to cause harm to the then Chief Justice of Ghana, Madam Georgina Woode, because she was not doing the bidding of the then government in power – the National Democratic Congress: NDC) said in court on June 29, 2016. After being sentenced, Mr. Nelson appealed to the court's sense of mercy and sought to justify this appeal with a claim that he suffers a rather rare disease which apparently causes him to make statements he could not defend (Nelson on the Montie 3 Saga – https://www.graphic-online.com. Monday, July 9, 2018). Here, one can say that the illness is pragmatically mentioned to give the impression that he deserves the court's mercy. What Mr. Nelson attempts to do is to show that though

reason precludes a certain sentence, it be abandoned, and an opposite course of action taken – showing mercy to him.

The appeal to pity is an emotional appeal where the goal is to make a description of one's supposedly pitiful circumstances seem like a refutation. This is, in short, any attempt to make the opposing party in a discussion alter their position solely out of pity for one thing or the other. The appeal could be made in various ways. One way to make the appeal is to suggest that because person X is pathetic, a certain reasonable conclusion be abandoned. There could also be an appeal to pity put in another way by claiming that because person X expended much effort in an attempt at something, whatever conclusion he or she reaches is true or correct. Take for example what happened in Ghana's politics during the run-off to the 2008, 2012 and 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. These election periods featured appeals to pity in favour of John Evans Atta Mills (2008) and Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo (2012, 2016). Recall, from chapter 1 of this work, that John Evans Atta Mills eventually won power in the 2008 election and became the third president in Ghana's 4th Republic and Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo also won power in 2016, becoming the fifth president in Ghana's 4th Republic. Mills had contested two elections earlier, 2000 and 2004 and lost on both occasions. So, the appeal, as his campaigners used, was that since he had worked so hard in 2000 and 2004 at attaining the office and had lost on both occasions, he be voted for, at least, to show him some love, out of pity that he had suffered so much because of politics. Followers of Akuffo-Addo, the NPP especially, also used the same appeal in 2016.

The problem with this fallacy, as with all unwarranted emotional appeal is that if undetected, it may lead to quite regrettable actions because it evades the commitment of providing solid evidence for a stated claim. A suspect may be allowed bail only because his lawyer made a fallacious emotional appeal to pity in court. In such a situation, the question of whether the suspect is good enough to abide by the bail terms is left open and leaves open the option that the suspect might renege.

Consider the instance below to explain the appeal to pity fallacy in politics, in Ghana:

Member of Parliament for Krachi West, Helen Ntoso, in expressing her worry over President Akufo-Addo's failure to address issues regarding the kidnap of some young women in Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana, commits the *Appeal to Pity fallacy* as she said:

It is rather unfortunate that the president didn't find space in his 30-page address in talking about girls who were kidnapped. Mr. Speaker (The Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana) I'm a mother and there's no one here that when his or her child is kidnapped will be able to have a sound sleep (Helen Ntoso on Three Missing Takoradi girls – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, February 26, 2019).

Ms. Helen Ntoso simply evokes sympathies from the Speaker for the victims, herself and the public in general, for why the president should have addressed the issue of the kidnapped girls in his address. This is fallacious. However, her argument would be non-fallacious, provided, in addition to evoking compassion on behalf of the victims, she had supplied information about why they are genuinely deserving of help or special consideration.

3.3.2 The red herring fallacy

The red herring is another common informal fallacy that appears in political discourses in Ghana often. In argumentation, it is mandatory that a conclusion be relevant to its premise(s) and vice versa. An argument may be said to be illogical if its conclusion is not relevant to the premise(s). Consider this argument: 'Child labour is on the increase these days. We must institute a one-couple--child policy in the country.' Arguments such as these may be classed under one umbrella, known as the Red Herring fallacy. This is so because in the example above, it could be inferred that the premise of the argument – Child labour is on the increase these days – does not warrant the conclusion – We must institute a one-couple-child policy. The premise does not support, wholly, the acceptance of the conclusion.

The Red Herring is also known as the *ignoratio elenchi* (literally, ignorance of the refutation or ignorance of the nature of refutation). This is a fallacy that seeks to prevent the listener from reaching certain conclusions. For this reason, it is classed among those fallacies known as fallacies of distraction (Walton 2008:94). The name given to this fallacy comes from an old Western tactic used to prevent hunters from killing foxes (Walton 2008:94). The idea was to distract hunting dogs from the trail of foxes by creating a false scent with 'red' or smoked herring (Walton 2008:94). The nature of this fallacy becomes clearer, presumably, after the anecdote. The instances below appeared in political discourses in Ghana and they help elaborate this (red herring) further. To start with, in 2007, the minority side of Ghana's Parliament alleged that the Minister of Trade, Mr. Alan Kojo Kyeremanteng, had been involved in acts of corruption by taking money in order to offer seats for participants for a business conference in Accra. And Mr. Ebenezer Nii Narh

Nartey, a member of Parliament on the Majority side, commenting on this allegation, commits the red herring fallacy as he leaps from allegation to Press conference organized by the minority. This is the allegation and Mr. Nartey's comment which commits the red herring fallacy:

The Minority in Ghana's Parliament call for a parliamentary probe into the $ 100,000 scandal that had hit the Trades ministry, where the current Ghana's Trade Minister, Mr. Alan Kojo Kyeremanteng is alleged to have collected One Hundred Thousand American dollars ($ 100,000) from entrepreneurs in order to offer them seats close to the President of Ghana, at a business/entrepreneur meeting (Minority in Parliament allege cash for seats – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, December 30, 2017).

Ebenezer Nii Narh Nartey: For me I think that the minority wants to be heard and if they go ahead to do a press conference, that will be 319 press conferences since they went into opposition. In fact, even if you are a Member of Parliament on the side of the majority and you are seen talking to someone and they see you, they will organize a press conference (Ebenezer Nii Narh, Minority is a press conference party – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Saturday, December 30, 2017).

Here, Ebenezer, Member of Ghana's Parliament for Ablekuma Central, ignores completely the allegation from the minority and then diverts attention to the number of press conferences the minority have held so far. It must be noted that in here the topic of diversion has no link at all to the thesis of the argument – That the Minister of Trade has been involved in an act of corruption. Red herring completely ignores the opponents'

argument. Ebenezer would end his submission as if he had succeeded in defeating the reason for the press conference.

Another example of this fallacy can be seen in the debate below:

Obaasima Serwah Akoto: Honourable, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Ghana Water Company has told us that the scarcity of water is partly as a result of the activities of illegal miners (*galamseyers*). You're a member of the Parliamentary committee that supervises our water bodies, how often do you as a committee go to the field to see what happens around our water bodies?

Sampson Ahi: This is a natural weather problem which has existed from 2012 till now, after the change of government our brothers and sisters in the NPP think they should have whatever they want, but that will not help. We in the NDC believe that what we all want as a people we should have it." (Obaasima Serwaa on Ghana Water Company and '*galamsey*' – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, February 6, 2018).

The above is an interview between host of Kasapa FM, Obaasima Serwah Akoto and Former Deputy Minister for Water Resources, Works and Housing, Sampson Ahi. Mr. Ahi who also doubles as a Member of Ghana's Parliament deliberately digressed from the question being asked for reasons best known to him and intentionally vigorously attacked the self-introduced position. His assumption was that the host would assume he had answered her question. Although many who listened to the program attributed this – the Member of parliament's (MP's) and former deputy minister's digression – to the possibility of the Hon. Parliamentarian "sleep talking." This is a typical example of red

herring. However, there is the possibility that it was intentional; the MP in trying to "dodge" the question was not smart enough that he made it, the digression, very obvious.

Member of Ghana's Parliament (MP) for Ningo Prampram, Mr. Sam George, arguing on how to curb the activities of vigilante groups (political party groups in Ghana who are used during elections to disrupt election processes – stealing ballot boxes, beating political opponents, etc.), commits the Red *herring fallacy*:

If we want to stall this menace which I think is a monster that is growing in this country, we must not do it in a pretentious manner but face the bull and look at it in the face. The solution to this whole menace I believe lies with our land tenure system. These members don't do political activities every day. Most times, once every four years or when there is a political activity, what do they do on a daily basis? They are land guards! So, if we fix our land tenure systems, we will not need to have land guards again. If the police are allowed to do their work and clamp down on them (land guards), there will be no jobs for them (land guards) …" (Sam George – 'Vigilantism' in Ghana's politics – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, February 26, 2019).

The MP is conversant with the issue of land guards (a case in Ghana where people legally acquire properties, plots of land, etc. and other people use heavily built men with very heavy muscles to use might to take these properties from the legal and rightful owners), or perhaps he is much bothered with land tenure system, so he swiftly digresses the argument from vigilante groups to land guard system where he can fully express himself. He argues that way probably to bring forth the issue of land guards which also might need some attention; otherwise, land guard system and vigilante groups are two different things altogether.

3.3.3 Argument against the person fallacy

The argument against the person (*Argumentum ad hominem* in Latin), can be of three types, namely, circumstantial, abusive and the *tu-quoque*. This is one of the fallacies which feature prominently in political discourses in Ghana. Instead of providing evidence for a refutation of an opponent's position, the issue is dismissed based on an irrelevant appraisal of the opponent's personality or character (Tindale 2006:45). The appraisal ends in a conclusion that the opponent's character or circumstances make his position unsound. According to Walton, personal attacks are technically speaking, not fallacious; they only become so when the revelation amounting to the attack is irrelevant to the issue (Walton 2008:170). That is to say, personal attacks lead to fallacy if the attack causes one to reject another's reasoning because of the other's situation, circumstance, etc. – Rejecting someone's reasoning because of the person's circumstance, situation, etc. (Klement 2009: 385).

The *ad hominem* abusive fallacy shifts the line of reasoning from argumentation to what might amount to verbal abuse. The character or personality of the opponent is presented as one of the premises in a bad argument concluding that s/he is wrong. Name-calling and 'throwing shade' at an opponent in an argument amount to an abusive personal attack fallacy (Klement 2009: 385).

The *ad hominem* fallacy – circumstantial – can be committed when an arguer rejects an opponent's position because it was propounded and or is preached by a person or people of ill-repute (Klement 2009: 385). For instance, for a person to reject the free Senior High School Policy introduced in Ghana by the current government (the NPP government) simply because it is an NPP idea, (even when the arguer believes that such

a rejection is ill-reputed), is fallacious because the rejection (of the free Senior High School Policy) ignores other factors necessary for a correct appraisal of the social intervention program.

Stated differently, the circumstantial *ad hominem* fallacy is committed when the position of an opponent is denied due to the circumstances in the opponent's life. The issuer insinuates a causal link between his opponent's position and the opponent's circumstances; circumstantial attacks, to put it loosely, provide irrelevant circumstantial evidence for a conclusion based solely on the opponent's circumstances (Walton 2008:172).

When the circumstantial attack is advanced in a way to make the opponent seem like a hypocrite, the circumstantial *ad hominem* fallacy is of a variety known as the Tu Quoque (you're another) fallacy (Walton 2008:173). In response to allegations that the NDC is corrupt, the current MP for Ada East, an NDC MP, asserts that the NPP is more corrupt than the NDC. What this implies is that the claim that Mr. John Mahama, the immediate past president of Ghana, and his NDC government are corrupt is baseless because it (the allegation) was made by hypocrites in the NPP. The technique involves an admission of the truth of the opponent's position but then dismisses it as insignificant by alleging that he or she is equally culpable of whichever conduct is at issue. To argue that a position is unreasonable due to inconsistencies in it is an enterprise sharply different from arguing that a claim is wrong because of the person or people who support it. Consider the following examples to buttress this group of fallacies:

On October 25, 2018, news broke out that Ghana's Maritime authority boss had spent GHC (Ghana Cedi) 1.3 billion in one night on food bought from his own hotel for an

end of year party. Documents on the said event which hosted seven people, sparked a conflict-of-interest debate that sent social media users crazy over misuse of public funds for such an insignificant event. "A Plus", a very popular Ghanaian musician, was said to have leaked the documents on social media. Below is the response from the First Vice-chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Central region, when he was asked of his view on the above issue, on Adom FM, a very popular radio station in Accra, Ghana.

Ekow Ewusi : "If you are not evil, why would you do this? A Plus is a liar and a wizard" (Ekow Ewusi calls 'A Plus' a liar and a wizard – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, November 6, 2018).

This is a case of the *tu quoque* and name calling fallacy as Ekow Ewusi labels 'A Plus' as a liar and a wizard, and, thus, has no moral right referring to other people as corrupt – A liar and a wizard referring to others as corrupt (My own addition).

From the above, the substance of the argument was as to whether indeed the Maritime boss had spent the money and as to whether it was an expedient expenditure of the tax payer's money. Ekow Ewusi was thus supposed to either affirm or deny the allegation against the maritime boss and give justifications as to why he thinks so. However, Ekow Ewusi rather resorted to attacking the personality of the person who is alleged to have brought the news to the public domain (the whistleblower) and in the process completely ignores the main focus of the argument. In the example below, Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketia commits the *ad hominem*, abusive, fallacy when he referred to Mr. Bryan Acheampong, Ghana's National Security officer, as a terrorist – possessing a spirit of terrorism.

Johnson Asiedu Nketia; ALSO KNOWN AS General Mosquito (The General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress – NDC): "Bryan Acheampong has worked with the American Army before. He was once sent to Afghanistan to fight with Talibans. There, they fight with masks, so that is the experience he has, and that is why the president appointed him to be in charge of National Security. There is a spirit of terrorism in him and that is what we saw during the by-elections…" (Asiedu Nketia, Bryan Acheampong is a Taliban – https://www.yen.com.gh. Sunday, February 18, 2019).

The general secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Johnson Asiedu Nketia, popularly known as General Mosquito, in an attempt to condemn acts of violence at Ayawaso West Wuogon (By-election) and call for the sacking of the Commander of National Security, Mr. Bryan Acheampong, ended up abusing the latter – Bryan Acheampong. He, Asiedu Nketia, was simply to state his justifications for holding such a position, why he did not believe in the national security office in general and Mr. Bryan Acheampong in particular, rather than resorting to attacking the personality and person of the security officer.

In another example, a member of Ghana's Parliament, Mr. Sam George, commits the *ad hominem*, circumstantial, fallacy, when the president talked about the need to raise the standard of education in Ghana and Sam George referred to the president as obtaining a Third Class in the University, and therefore, cannot talk about standard of education.

It is a known fact that Nana Addo graduated from the University of Ghana with third class. To go to the University and get a third class, it means you scored between 40% and 49%... Is this the person to come and talk about education in this country? Is

this the person to come and gloat about what he calls; failure? (Sam George, Nana Addo had Third Class in the University – https://www.peacefmonline.com/gh. Monday, September 3, 2018).

To begin with, Samuel George, a Member of Ghana's Parliament for Ningo Prampram Constituency of Ghana, made this assertion on the Alhaji and Alhaji program on Radio Gold. Here Sam George tried to discredit the argument of Nana Akufo Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana on education by calling attention to the president's hypocrisy and ineptitude. The class Nana Akufo Addo graduated with from the university does not deprive him of the right to criticize the current state of education in Ghana, does it? The honorable Member of parliament ignored the substance of Akufo Addo's argument and rather cited an alleged academic failure of the president, and based on that, concludes that the president is inept in the same area he (the president) tries to advise the other to strive to perform better.

Again, the Juaboso member of Ghana's Parliament, Kwabena Mintah Akando, of the main opposition party, NDC, in his comments in the wake of attacks by pro-NDC Vigilante Group, the 'Hawks' at the Ashanti Regional headquarters of the National Democratic Congress in Kumasi, indirectly commits the *Argument Against the Person fallacy*, specifically, *the tu quoque* when he said:

Nana Addo: "I want to use the platform of this Message to make a sincere, passionate appeal to the leaders of the two main political parties in our country, the New Patriotic Party (the NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (the NDC), to come together, as soon as possible, preferably next week, to agree on appropriate measures to bring an end to this worrying and unacceptable phenomenon of vigilantism in our body politic.

Mintah Akando, in reacting to the above said: There are some "macho men" (heavily built men, my own interpretation) who are always seen around the president and who follow him wherever he goes; some of them I can identify. They were with him during the campaign season when the president was a candidate, so how can he (the president) call for same to be disbanded? (Akando, Nana Addo cannot disband vigilantism – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Saturday, February 23, 2019).

Mr Akando passed this comment when the president of Ghana, Nana Addo, of the ruling party, NPP, called on both the ruling and the main opposition party leaders to help bring vigilante groups in the country to an end, else, he, the president would do it through legislation. So, the issue at hand is fight against political vigilantes. Mr. Akando's comment, however, presupposes that the president is not the right person, or is not fit to address the issue of vigilantism. The comment implies that the president himself uses vigilantes as his security, thus the president himself is already in the same situation that he is critical of. The comment, therefore, portrays the president as being hypocritical. Thus, committing the *tu quoque* fallacy.

In another example, member of Ghana's Parliament for the Yunyoo Constituency, Joseph Bipoba Naabu blames former President John Dramani Mahama for the National Democratic Congress' woeful defeat in the 2016 elections. Below is a reaction from Former Ashanti Regional Minister, John Alexander Ackon (who served in former president Mahama's government), to Naabu's criticism:

If I want to be popular in this world, I can make a statement which will intend create controversy which will make me popular within few days. He (Joseph Naabu) is frustrated because he did not receive any ministerial appointment from the former

President, hence his rant. Until Naabu's comments about former President Mahama, nobody knew him. The only time people are hearing about him is when he started his controversial statements (Ackon, Naabu is using Mahama to achieve popularity – https://www.ultimatefmonline.com. Thursday, March 23, 2017)

From the above, the former Ashanti Regional Minister, John Alexander Ackon, tries to discredit his colleague's argument by alluding to certain circumstances that affect the latter. He makes mention of how Naabu was deprived of (any) ministerial position; and also, his alleged low popularity. However, the stated circumstances in no way take away the substance of Naabu's argument. Naabu missing in on a ministerial appointment and being unpopular do not make him predisposed to criticizing the former president. Ackon commits the *ad hominem*, circumstantial, fallacy.

3.3.4 The appeal to force or stick fallacy

The appeal to the stick or force is yet another informal fallacy that appears frequently in political discourses in Ghana. Commonly, people resort to force to make their opponent in an argument accept a certain position or take a certain action. Harm is promised should an opponent refuse to commit to a certain position (Walton 2008:175). This may indeed be one of the most ancient and common fallacies of all time. Fallacies of this form are called *argumentum ad baculum* (literally, appeals to the stick or force) (Walton 2008:175). Instead of well thought out and evidenced premises, the threat or force is used to extract a certain conclusion that inevitably benefits one who uses this technique. The force involved in this fallacy may be in different forms; from crass physical force or subtle emotional force (Walton 2008:175). Depending on the amount of fear an arguer can induce in his opponent, the *ad baculum* may prove very effective. This

notwithstanding, the *ad baculum* is based on the primitive disposition that 'might make right' which is now regarded as a counter-productive assertion (Tindale 2006:47).

When the cocoa farmers at Annorkrom in the Western Region of Ghana gave the government an ultimatum that if government did not increase the prices of cocoa, they (the farmers) will not vote for the government in the 2020 general elections in Ghana, they (the farmers) were appealing to threat or force (Annorkrom Cocoa farmers threaten government over cocoa prices – https//www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, April 30, 2017). Here, the aim of the farmers was to strong-arm government and policy makers into accepting their conclusion that if cocoa prices were not increased, they will not vote for the government in the 2020 general elections in Ghana. In this case, the farmers neglect their commitment in the dialogue to provide reasonable evidence as to why the cocoa prices should be increased. This is not to say, however, that such reasonable evidence was unavailable, but for one reason or the other, that information was withheld in their argument. In place of that, a rather vague appeal to the stick or force was made and this made their argument fallacious. Consider the related examples below for further appreciation of this fallacy:

Mr. Osei Kofi Acquah: I will stage *coup détat* against this government should they initiate any move to legalize homosexuality in Ghana. It is barbaric and horrible to legalize homosexuality. I will use all forms of moves to remove President Akufo Addo if he dares make homosexuality legal. I will storm the Presidency with sticks and stones to attack the President if he dares. (Osei Kofi Acquah on Homosexuality – https://www.mynewsgh.com. Friday, December 1, 2017).

In the example above, the outspoken Ashanti Regional Communications Director of the NDC was talking to radio host Kofi Asante Ennin, host of Nhyira FM Political Talk Show. From the submission above one can be sure of one thing: Mr. Acquah highly abhors homosexuality. However, to make a good argument he was expected to give cogent justifications as to why he holds such a position. One would realize that Mr. Acquah did the opposite – he resorted to physical threat as a means to make the President accept his submission. Another example could be found in the indented citation below:

Defense deal: We would not be tired of Demonstration – Asiedu Nketiah to Akufo-Addo (Asiedu Nketia on Defense deal – http://www.peacefmonline.com. Friday, March 2, 2018).

While the first instance was a case of physical threat, the instance directly above is psychological. Here, in an attempt by the General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress, Mr. Asiedu Nketiah on behalf of his party to make the President, Nana Akuffo-Addo, withdraw the alleged arms deal with the U. S., uses psychological threat. The President having a mental picture of waking up every day to deal with a demonstration would be compelled to withdraw the said arms deal. It must be noted that here Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketiah didn't state why it should be withdrawn; however, he only hints on a possible consequence to push forward his message.

In delivering his 2019 State of the Nation Address in Parliament, the president, Nana Akufo-Addo, instructed the leadership of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) which he belongs to, to extend an invitation to the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) to discuss how to disband their respective vigilante groups. In his statement he commits or employs the *Appeal to Force or Threat fallacy:*

I have asked the leadership of the NPP to extend an invitation to the leadership of the NDC for such a meeting. The security services of the country will be on standby to assist this meeting… If voluntary disbandment by the parties is not feasible, then I will initiate legislation on the matter… (Nana Addo to legislate on vigilantism – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, February 21, 2019).

The statement of the president is fallacious in the sense that if there is an urgent need for the two parties to meet and discuss in order to curb political vigilantism, it should be done cooperatively. Better still, the president fails to provide enough reasons or convincing reasons for the urgent call, rather, he threatens to apply force, coercion, no matter whatever, the outcome of the call. This threat can be seen in two ways: that he will employ the security services—'the security services of the country will be on standby' (physical threat); and that he will use his authority—he 'will initiate legislation' (legal threat); thus, the other party must comply.

3.3.5 The appeal to ignorance fallacy

The Appeal to Ignorance is another significant fallacy that appears often in Ghana's political discourses. The appeal to ignorance is also known as *argumentum ad ignorantium* in Latin. This fallacy involves arguing that in the absence of proof for a claim, the claim is false and in the absence of a refutation, the claim is true (Tindale 2006:52). The mistake is however that a lack of either proof or refutation for an assertion does not automatically determine its (the claim's) truth value; the rules of reasoned dialogue are against such unwarranted extrapolations (Walton 2008: 56).

The error in this fallacy is that ignorance is used, rather ironically, to support a claim. People rarely concede ignorance when there is some rhetorical profit to be gained from exploiting this ignorance. To claim, merely, that you are not aware of any steps being taken by the current government to curb poverty in the country is to commit no error. To add, however, that because you are not aware of any steps being taken by the current government to curb poverty in the country, it is evident that the government is not taking any steps is to commit the appeal to ignorance fallacy. For further understanding of this fallacy, consider the instance below:

Yaw Buabeng Asamoah: Insofar as nobody has leveled corruption against him (Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo) makes him a corruption clean politician (Yaw Buabeng Asamoah, Nana Addo is corruption clean politician – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, November 22, 2012).

This was an argument by the then Deputy Communication Director of the NPP in defense of Nana Akufo-Addo, the then flagbearer of the NPP. This argument is fallacious because the absence of a proof is no guarantor of innocence. Although the laws of the country state emphatically that innocent until proven guilty, evidence and proofs may provide necessary but not sufficient reasons to either hold or disprove an allegation. This is to say that ignorance of proof of corruption against Nana Addo should not be a logical defense of his innocence – corruption clean politician.

3.3.6 The appeal to irrelevant authority

The appeal to irrelevant authority is common in Ghana's political discourse. Such an appeal occurs when one invokes an authority to back an assertion when either the

authority is not an expert in the area under discussion or the area being discussed is a controversial one and the authority invoked supports one position (Walton 2008:209). In the second scenario, the authority may not be worthy of the trust needed to make an appeal to him, the authority, appropriate (Walton 2008:209). For example, Dr. Mahamadu Bawumia, the vice president of Ghana, is an appropriate authority to invoke on some specific issues of finance (based on his academic qualifications) but an appeal to Dr. Bawumia to support a claim about auto engineering is logically inappropriate.

When a party in dialogue attempts to use as evidence, an authority who is not relevant to the issue, he or she commits a fallacy known as the *argumentum ad verecundiam* (from coyness or modesty) (Hamblin 1970:159). There are authorities in every field and especially, in academic circles they may be used as evidence to support a position. This may be a direct reaffirmation of the position of a scholar noted in the field for which you invoke him in your argument. The argument is an *ad verecundiam* fallacy when the authority invoked as evidence is either not noted in the field under discussion or is rather noted in another field altogether (Hamblin 1970:159). In the example below, Mr. Samuel Ofosu Ampofo commits the appeal to irrelevant authority fallacy when he said that the Gitmo-two men (two men alleged to be terrorists and brought to Ghana from Guantanamo Bay in 2015 for rehabilitation) were harmless and pose no threats to Ghana's security. Mr. Ampofo commits this fallacy because he is not an expert in security nor matters of terrorism and so he cannot be the authority to declare the two Guantanamo men as 'terrorists free'.

Head Line for Yen.com: "Gitmo 2 not threat to Ghana – Ofosu Ampofo, top member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) says so" (Ofosu Ampofo on Gitmo 2 – https://www.yen.com.gh. Thursday, June 7, 2018).

The profile of Mr. Samuel Ofosu Ampofo proves he was a former District Chief Executive, Member of parliament, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Eastern Regional Minister and currently the National Chairman of the NDC. However, none describes him as a security analyst or expert or someone who has received requisite knowledge on national security in order to be used as an authority in relation to such issues. Thus, it is fallacious to use him as a credible source or for him to pose as a security expert on issues of national security regardless his status and rank in Ghanaian politics.

3.3.7 The false cause fallacy

The false cause fallacy is yet another informal fallacy that appears often in political discourses in Ghana. In dialogue, one sometimes asserts a causal relationship between two events. Sometimes it is relevant to the discussion that such a claim be made. Without the assumption that uncontrolled fires cause destruction, a fireman cannot advice you to be careful with flames. However, there is the tendency to mistakenly assume this causal relationship. We may sometimes argue that because two events or things are mostly found together, one must cause the other. This kind of reasoning is problematic because we refuse to take into account other factors that must be satisfied to justify such a conclusion. When there is a correlation between two events, say A and B, it may mean the correlation is a coincidence; that A causes B; that B causes A or that an extra event C causes both A and B. Failure to assess all these parameters before drawing a

conclusion claiming a causal relationship usually lands one into committing a false cause fallacy (Walton 2008:258).

The false cause fallacy has various arguments that characterize it. In some cases, it is called the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this) fallacy and in others it is called the *non causa pro causa* (literally, not cause for cause) fallacy (Walton 2008:260). A false cause fallacy occurs when the reasoning regarding a cause and effect relationship is defective. The defect may occur when a cause is mistakenly assumed, when an effect has been mistaken for a cause, or vice versa. When a false cause is assumed, the fallacy is of the type called *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. This fallacy is committed when one assumes that because one thing almost always happens before another thing, the former causes the latter (Walton 2008:260). The argument that rainfall causes an end to a Harmattan season, the period in West Africa especially from December to somewhere February where there is no rain and there is total dryness everywhere, (dry season) is a case of false cause because the general assumption is that because it normally rains before a Harmattan season finally ends, the rains cause this end to the Harmattan season.

The variation in this case is the fallacy of mistaken correlation for cause; a fallacy that is based on faulty causal reasoning. Here, because witchcraft and pregnancy related problems seem to have a relationship in some particular societies, the former may be said to cause the latter. The error in this kind of reasoning lies in the fact that there could be an explored cause of pregnancy related problems and ignorance of this extra cause may even aggravate the situation further (Walton 2008:261).

In much of our reasoning, we assume a cause and effect relationship between certain occurrences. In fact, it is part of common reasoning for us as humans to accept that some things or events lead to other events. It is indeed no error to reason, for instance, that touching a bare high-tension electric wire will cause or - even generally - causes death. There is, however, a wrong way to reason from experience that something, say the advent of a new drug called Tramadol, causes another thing, viz, recalcitrance among the youth of the country. The identification and avoidance of this fallacy is relevant because sometimes an error in causal reasoning may result in faulty testimonies which may result in people serving terms in jail mistakenly. Another example is:

Stephen Atta Owusu: Since its inception, the NDC has been hijacked by people from the Volta and the Northern regions. Their third largest sympathizers come from the Central and Western regions. Any member from any of the two regions who rises to the position of president or vice must ultimately die. The secret behind this can only be explained by the gurus of NDC… From what I have discussed so far, it stands to reason that it is risky for a Fante to assume a high office in the NDC. My only advice to Ekow Spio Garbrah is to quit the NDC race if he wants to live long (Stephen Atta Owusu advises Spio Garbrah – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, November 4, 2018).

Here, Stephen Atta Owusu argues that Ekow Spoi Garbrah, an aspiring flagbearer of the National Democratic Party, should not contest in the upcoming NDC primaries. His justifications are based on an assumed causal relation between Fantes holding high positions in the Party and untimely, dying or death, awaiting them. However, these are mere claims which he has no cogent evidence to buttress. He argues on an

assumed causal relation between two things which are different in all aspects; and no evidence, whatsoever, supports the claim.

3.3.8 The slippery slope fallacy

The slippery slope involves, basically, an error in reasoning regarding the conditionals "if" and "then". This is a false cause fallacy that assumes a weak cause and effect relationship between a series of events where the idea is that if the opponent accepts the possibility of the first event in the erroneous causal chain, then they must accept the truth of all the other events (den Hartog 1998: 280). Instead of providing adequate reasons for advocating a position, the issuer of this fallacy describes a slope of undesired events and asserts that the speaker is bound to fall down this slope if they choose to maintain their position in the dialogue. The issuer attempts to use an illegitimate appeal to fear by narrating a causal chain of (improbable) events to get his opponent to abandon some targeted commitments in the dialogue (den Hartog 1998: 280).

A significant characteristic of this fallacy is the weakness of the supposed causal connection implying that not all causal slopes are slippery or fallacious. Some causal chains are inductively stronger than others and this fallacy occurs when the causal argument is too weak to be credible (den Hartog 1998: 280). To argue that the legalization of cannabis in Ghana as a section of Ghanaians are arguing in Ghana today will lead to further legalization of cocaine and create a society of addicts is a slippery slope because there isn't any concrete evidence suggesting that most, if not all, countries that legalize cannabis end up with societies of drug addicts (NDC members and some Ghanaians hold legalizing cannabis in Ghana will create a society of drug addicts – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Monday, August 19, 2019).

3.3.9 The fallacy of hasty generalization

The fallacy of hasty generalization is another informal fallacy that frequently appears in political discourses in Ghana. Inductive reasoning has several uses and one of them is that inductive reasoning enables us to generalize (Walton 2008: 246). Thus, we use the statistical correlation observed, say, between fishes and water to conclude by generalization that fishes live in water. A generalization may go wrong, however, if the sample size used as the basis for a generalization is unconvincingly small. Weak inductions often result in fallacious generalizations. This fallacy is committed when a generalization is made when it is uninformed and hence unjustified.

Also, when the statistics upon which a generalization is made is biased, the generalization loses its strength (Walton 2008:246). This occurs when emotions are employed in the data collection process that renders the conclusion unrepresentative of the class generalized. A person who meets three Ga (a tribe in Ghana) men and detests their attitude might fallaciously generalize that all Ga men have bad attitudes. Stereotypes and prejudices are formed mostly through hasty generalization, hence, the controversy that surrounds rhetorical devices. The discourses below illustrate this further:

Titus Glover: Mahama and his NDC cohorts really didn't treat Ghanaians well because they, Mahama and his cohorts, deceived them (Ghanaians) with lies and that forced them (Mahama and his cohorts) into opposition. Mahama even failed to prosecute his people, he himself was so corrupt. All NDC members have PHD in corruption (Titus Glover on Mahama and the NDC – https://www.pulse.com.gh. Tuesday, November 27, 2018).

The member of Ghana's Parliament for Tema East, Titus Glover, commits the fallacy of hasty generalization because he draws a conclusion about the whole NDC party which has millions of followers using just "alleged" evidence of few NDC officials. Regardless the number of evidences he had at this particular instance, they would still not be representational enough to draw such a conclusion, and, more importantly, these are even instances of alleged corruption cases and not legally and evidentially proven cases. The illustration below is another example:

Kennedy Agyapong: Politicians from the three Northern Regions of Ghana don't lift one another up because they believe the race to the top is a competition where each of them thinks of himself first rather than support one another, particularly the young ones…In Mahama's hometown Bole, they look after patients on a plywood with a drip on their hand and all. What has Mahama done for them? He and all his brothers, Ibrahim, Alfred, … what did they do? (Kennedy Agyapong on Mahama and his (Mahama's) family) – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Saturday, October 20, 2018).

With the above instance, the Member of Ghana's Parliament for the Assin Central Constituency cites names of politicians from Northern Ghana and alleges they are not helping their communities. He then bases on these few persons to create a generalization that Northerners do not support one another. This is an instance of how hasty generalization plays a role in racial, ethnic, tribal and religious prejudices and stereotyping. This statement is fallacious because the sample size is not significant enough to draw such a conclusion.

3.3.10 The fallacy of weak analogy

The fallacy of weak analogy could be described as a variety of the fallacies of hasty generalization. This fallacy, together with its related fallacy – fallacy of suppressed evidence, also appears often in Ghana's political discourses. Arguing from analogy is important for ensuring that our points are clearly made in a discourse. People argue from analogy in applications for employment (Walton 2008:250). To say, for example that because you have been a good assemblyman and a member of parliament before and thus will make a good President is to argue from analogy. Arguments from analogy embody our day to day inductions. Since something is like another thing, this other identical something must also be like another thing. Arguments containing analogy mostly comprise two premises and a conclusion. One of these premises, called the similarity premise, claims two things to be similar, say A and B have some similar characteristics x and y. The base premise, the second premise in an analogical argument, establishes that A has a certain characteristic z. The conclusion, then, is that B, by having x and y in common with A, also has characteristic z (Walton 2005: 96).

An argument from analogy can be either strong or weak, depending on the level of likelihood of the truth of the conclusion. This level of likelihood is determined by how much information that could be inferred from the similarity premise. If this information given is enough to warrant the similarity claimed in the conclusion, the analogy is a strong or good one. If this year's rainfall pattern is like last year's, and because last year I had a bumper harvest, I then say I will have a bumper harvest this year. This kind of argument from analogy may be weak and fallacious when the similarity does not warrant the similarity the conclusion asserts (Fearnside and Holther 1959:4). For instance, other

factors may have aided the bumper harvest; example, good fertilizer, good seeds, etc. To argue, for example that because Kofi bought a car and found a wife shortly afterwards and because you have now bought a car you are going to find a wife shortly is to make a weak argument from analogy.

As children, we were lambasted with numerous false analogies, where our parents compared us to other children who, though our classmates, seem to be academically better than us. The similarity premise in such arguments is that you are both in the same class. The base premise then asserts that one of your classmates possesses a certain quality, say, intelligence. The conclusion then claims that you must also have that characteristic. Such arguments from analogy are weak because these classmates who are supposed analogues often have significant peculiarities which compromise the logical legitimacy of the inductive inference. A classmate whose comprehension in class seems above average may be said to be incomparable to us because they may have a computer at home while we do not, etc. The example below illustrates this further:

We will borrow money; everybody borrows money. The United States of America is one of the biggest debtors in the world. So, borrowing money is not necessarily a betrayal of the concept of independence. The key for us in borrowing money is that we borrow money to create assets that will allow us to pay the money back. That is the key… if we borrow the money and use it properly, it is an asset for us in expanding our economy and infrastructure (Akuffo-Addo on borrowing – https://www.yen.com. Thursday, October 25, 2018).

In the quote above, the president, Akuffo-Addo, was speaking at the entrepreneurship forum in Nigeria on Thursday, October 25, 2018, organized by the Tony

Elumelo Foundation. This argument didn't sound logical because the President failed to make known in his submission that he was the founder and mastermind beyond the hashtag "Ghana Beyond Aid". The President suppressed the statement below in order to make the statement above logically acceptable.

We can no longer continue to make policies for ourselves, in our country, in our region, in our continent on the basis of whatever support that the Western world of France, or the European Union can give us. It will not work. It has not worked and it will not work (Akuffo-Addo on Ghana beyond aid – https://www.yen.com. Thursday, October 25, 2018).

3.3.11 The wishful thinking fallacy

The wishful thinking fallacy is another fallacy that appears in almost every political discourse in Ghana. A wishful thinking fallacy or the desirability bias occurs when a position is committed to in an argument, only because it is in line with what one desires (Krizan and Windschitl 2009:1). The element of desire that characterizes this fallacy ends up producing in the subject a certain obstinately unrealistic optimism which, as commonsense dictates, cannot be used to replace evidence in an argument (Krizan and Windschitl 2009:1).

As an error in reasoning, wishful thinking leads to cognitive bias, where the subjects live their lives in a mental state analogous to living in an extraterrestrial paradise; a utopia of sorts. In appropriate dosages, wishful thinking has been argued by medical experts as a positive mental exercise (Kunda 1990). As human beings we are bombarded with a lot of sense data which we sort by paying levels of attention to each. One way of inducing attention to a thing is by associating it to an emotion like desire or fear. When,

however, this emotion of desire is inappropriately used, one stands the risk of committing the wishful thinking fallacy. The former president of Ghana, John Mahama, has indicated recently that he believes strongly that he has an unfinished business with Ghanaians and that belief of coming back to power to finish that business no one can stop him; not even the current president or the Electoral Commission of Ghana (John Mahama to come back to finish his presidency – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, June 20, 2019). This belief, by John Mahama, could be a clear case of wishful thinking – His coming back to power is only based on a certain belief that he has an unfinished business with Ghanaians. Belief, of course, cannot be used, in logic, as justification for a claim.

3.3.12 Appeal to the Masses

This fallacy is also known as *argumentum ad populum* – simply put, appeal to the people. It occurs when merely the beliefs or actions of a group; large or small, are substituted for evidence for or against some claim (Harrison III 1992:494). A general principle of rational thought is that simply because people believe that some claim is correct or acceptable, or act in a way suggesting that some claim is correct or acceptable, does not make that claim correct or acceptable (I have added my own emphasis) (Harrison III 1992:494). The example below explains this fallacy further:

Bernard Asubonteng: Mr. President, remind the talking heads that more powerful and rich sovereign countries such as Germany, UK, Italy, Norway, Australia, Netherlands, Spain, Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Turkey, and many others have U. S. military bases. Yet, none of them screams and uses fake, contradictory argument of the so-called infringement of its national sovereignty and potential attraction for terrorism (Bernard

Asubonteng, Ghana must accept U. S. Military Base – http://ghanaweb.com. Friday, March 23, 2018).

The above is an argument by Bernard Asubonteng as to why Ghanaians should accept the military deal (a military base) with the United States of America. In here, the speaker paints the picture that there are several countries all around the world that have U. S. Military bases and that Ghana would only be one of the many. His argument follows the pattern; 'because many other countries have U. S. Military bases, Ghana should also have one.' This is a typical example of the appeal to the masses fallacy; the speaker relies on the number of countries that have U. S. military bases instead of how important this base would/may be to the Ghanaian – the benefits and threats it may provide to Ghana. Also, there is some level of appeal to snobbery in this argument when the speaker made mention of "more powerful and rich countries (Harrison III 1992:495)," he made it seem as if the military bases were privileges of the rich and that Ghanaians should consider themselves lucky to be accorded such an opportunity when according to economic facts, Ghana is not rich. Another example is illustrated below:

Kennedy Agyapong needs to be punished for instigating violence against Tiger Eye PI members… A Majority of NPP members of parliament (MPs) agree with us (NDC MPs) that the conduct of Ken Agyapong is unbecoming of an MP and Parliament needs to check him (Kennedy Agyapong must be brought to book – Both Minority and Majority parliamentarians in Ghana agree. https://www.ghanaweb.com. Wednesday, January 23, 2019).

Here, the minority Chief Whip in Ghana's Parliament (of the National Democratic Congress – NDC) representing the Asawase constituency in the Ashanti region of Ghana,

Alhaji Muntaka Mubarak was calling for the prosecution of a colleague, member of parliament for Assin Central in the Central Region of Ghana, Mr. Kennedy Agyapong, he (Muntaka) suspected whose comments had led to the death of a journalist. In this vain, one would have expected the seasoned lawmaker, Muntaka, and Member of Parliament and a leader of the august House (Ghana's Parliament) to give justifications as to why he holds such grave accusations against his colleague. However, the MP rather resorted to demonstrating the number of people who want Hon. Kennedy Agyapong prosecuted. Muntaka, thus, commits the appeal to the masses fallacy.

3.3.13 The fallacy of missing the point

The fallacy of missing the point occurs when the premises of an argument lead, or seem to lead, to one conclusion and then a completely different conclusion is drawn. This fallacy, according to Harrison III, often occurs when, in the course of discussing one issue, an arguer begins to argue about an entirely different, though somehow related, issue. Again, Harrison III asserts that this fallacy occurs when an arguer draws a conclusion that goes far beyond anything for which he or she has provided evidence (Harrison III 1992:499). The example below illustrates this fallacy.

Prof. Ransford Gyampo: Listen to the Roads and Highways Minister fumbling on Adom FM. He is a total disaster and a failure. Running a ministry isn't child's play and propaganda. Dissolve the government (Ransford Gyampo calls for dissolution of the current government of Ghana. https://www.yen.com.gh. Saturday, November 10, 2018).

The above statement commits the fallacy of missing the point because the premise "Listen to the Roads and Highways Minister fumbling on Adom FM, he is a total

disaster and a failure; running a ministry isn't child's play and propaganda" deserves a better conclusion rather than the vague and mismatched conclusion of dissolving an entire government. On a worst-case scenario, Prof. Gyampo could have even called for the sacking of the minister, however, to call for the dissolution of an entire government because an individual minister fumbled is outrageously, missing the point.

3.3.14 The false dilemma fallacy

This fallacy occurs when a disjunctive premise incorrectly suggests, explicitly or implicitly, that the alternatives mentioned by the disjunction are mutually exclusive and exhaust all possible alternatives relevant to the conclusion. It is also referred to us fallacy of deceptive alternatives as it presents an either or claim and makes the claim mutually exclusive – as if they are the only alternatives that exist (Harrison III 1992:515). The example below illustrates this fallacy:

Rev. Owusu Bempah: The government of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo is working, it will take only thieves to complain. Anybody who is complaining was stealing free money and engaged in dubious acts and such loopholes have been blocked by Akufo-Addo (Owusu Bempah: Akuffo-Addo is doing very well as president – https://www.yen.com. Thursday, October 25, 2018).

In the example above, Rev. Ernest Owusu Bempah's argument follows the following logical form:

Either you agree that the government of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo is working or you're corrupt (a thief).

Surely you do not want to be tagged as corrupt (a thief).

Therefore, it follows that you agree that the government of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo is working.

This argument is fallacious – false dilemma – because the pastor cum politician makes it seem as if there are only two alternatives when it comes to criticizing the president and his government – You are either corrupt if you criticize or not corrupt if you keep your criticism. Below is another example:

Sekou Nkrumah: You'll get my support if you select Goosie Tandoh as Running mate - Mahama (Sekou Nkrumah, Mahama will get my vote if he chooses Tandoh as vice – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, February 28, 2019).

Dr. Sekou Nkrumah, son of the first president of the Republic of Ghana Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, gave Mahama this hint as to what to do to get his (Sekou's) support in the 2020 elections. This leaves the former president of Ghana and now a presidential aspirant, Mr. John Mahama, with a dilemma as to either (to) select Goosie Tandoh as his running mate and get the speaker's support or refuse to select Goosie Tandoh and lose Sekou's support. However, Sekou's options commit the false dilemma fallacy because the presidential aspirant, John Mahama, does not only require both options, necessarily, to win the 2020 elections – Mahama has more alternatives to win or lose the 2020 election than what Sekou has offered him.

3.3.15 Fallacy of ambiguity: Equivocation

This fallacy is committed when justifying the conclusion of an argument depends on the meaning of a single ambiguous expression shifting between two or more claims within

the argument – a shift of meaning is at the heart of the fallacy of equivocation (Harrison III 1992:4587). See the example below:

Iddrisu Musah Superior: The fabulous talent of this young man is a danger to the people of Tamale. Why would you want to mobilize innocent people on the streets just because you want to make profit? You want to use the blood of the people to make money? We won't tolerate that," he said. George Quaye: How dare you say @FancyGadam2 is using the blood of lives for rituals? I'm very disappointed in the Tamale Mayor (Iddrisu Musah on Fancy Gadam – https://www.graphiconline.com.gh, Saturday, June 30, 2018).

Here George Quaye took the literal meaning of the Municipal Chief Executive of Tamale, Iddrisu Musah Superior's statement, and then based on this understanding, drew the conclusion that he was disappointed in him for making such statement. The statement made by the Mayor was ambiguous in the sense that the phrase "want to use the blood of the people to make money" could either mean killing the people and offering their blood as sacrifice or engaging the people in a business which puts their lives at stake, while one gets one's profits.

3.3.16 Fallacy of accident

This fallacy is committed when a general rule is wrongly or unjustifiably applied to a specific case (Harrison III 1992:489). The example below illustrates this fallacy:

Police arrest koku Anyidoho over *coup* comments!

In reaction to this news, Mr. Divine Ferg Afedo, Chairman of Ho Central Constituency of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) issued out a press release. Below is an excerpt from the press:

The expression of an opinion publicly on any matter cannot create any flimsy excuse for opponent authority to intimidate any citizen… the government must tread cautiously and that freedom of speech is for everyone (Afedo on arrest of Anyidoho – https://www.graphiconline.com. Saturday, June 30, 2018).

The above argument is fallacious because the arguer, Afedo, tries to apply the general rule of freedom of speech to an instance where his defendant was arrested for inciting a 'possible' riot and a *coup d'état*. Although one has freedom of speech, one must also be meticulous enough when exercising this right not to put others or the nation at risk. The principle of free speech does not encourage harmful utterances and speech.

3.3.17 Complex or loaded question

This fallacy is committed when a question is couched in a manner as to limit direct replies to those that serve the questioner's agenda. This type of question serves as entrapment because it restricts the respondent to one answer, which answer will have further implications (Tindale 2006:62). The complex question fallacy is yet another ubiquitous fallacy often committed in political discourses in Ghana. Multimedia journalist Manasseh Azure Awuni on criticizing President Akufo-Addo for his (the latter's) lackadaisical handling of the controversial GYEEDA Scandal (that hit the previous government) employs, intentionally or unintentionally, the *complex question*:

...In the coming days, I will reveal or rather remind you about some of these rots. Today, however, I want an answer to one simple question. Mr. President, do you benefit directly from this theft? .... Your party said President Mahama could not act because he was benefitting directly from the theft. So, at this point, it is safe to ask whether you are unable

to act because you are benefitting directly from this theft… (Manasseh Azure on Gyeeda and Akuffo-Addo – https://www.yen.com.gh. Wednesday, January 17, 2018).

Mr. Azure's question – Do you benefit directly from this theft? – is not a simple question, rather, a complex question. The question simply demands a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. However, either answer lands the president into a trap. An answer in the affirmative implies that the president is also guilty of the theft of which he accused the ex-president; an answer in the negative will also mean that the president is benefitting indirectly from the theft, otherwise, why is he not taking any action? Thus, the question is meant to trap the president into 'accepting guilt'.

3.3.18 The straw man fallacy

Another fallacy to look at here is the straw man fallacy. This fallacy occurs when an attempt to discredit an argument is made by recasting the argument in a weak, exaggerated or foolish way not intended by the arguer and, then, attacking that refashioned argument as if it were the original one (Harrison III 1992:537). The example below explains this fallacy further

Honourable Agyarko: In certain situations, people have clarity on what to do and don't do it. We have a national issue and once dealing with it, in the process some wrong things may happen. Joseph Yamin: The government is a bad one, allow me to talk about it. Today, because you are in power you are saying when someone is killed it is okay. Honourable is saying when one is engaged in "*galamsey*," they can be shot dead. We should be condemning the offence. It is more serious than anything. We are talking about

someone's life here (Agyarko and Yamin over good governance. https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, February 19, 2017).

The above debate was between the Late Member of parliament for Ayawaso West Wuogon, Mr. Agyarko and Mr. Joseph Yamin, a former Deputy Ashanti Regional Minister. Here, Joseph Yamin commits the straw man fallacy when he put Mr. Agyarko out of context, thereby creating a new position which he attacks with the assumption he is attacking Mr. Agyarko's position.

3.4   Conclusion

In summary, the fallacies examined in this chapter are committed both intentionally and unintentionally by members of all classes of the Ghanaian society. Politicians, however, find this an avenue to score (political) points even when true, relevant facts are lacking. As has already been said, a fallacy may prove more dangerous than one expects since they have such emotional appeal. It is this emotional appeal that makes fallacies mostly persuasive, if one does not have very good understanding of fallacies. It is within this context that this chapter adopted persuasive-argumentation as framework for discussing fallacies which appear in political discourses in Ghana. The fallacies discussed here are not exhaustive; however, they constitute ubiquitous fallacies that appear in political discourses in Ghana. Indeed, many actions have been taken throughout the history of the country (Ghana) in particular and the world at large where reasoning has been the main motivator. Presidents have been overthrown, groups killed, policies neglected, and lives lost because of some actions motivated by what we may

now, with the benefit of hindsight, refer to as erroneous reasoning; cases of informal

fallacies in political discourses, to say the least.

Chapter Four

Some Common Informal Fallacies in Religious Discourses in Ghana

4.1   Introduction

This chapter explains what the language of religious discourses is (or should be, using some selected examples of prophecies and discourses largely in Ghana) and how this language affects an otherwise what should have been a rational way of demonstrating one's faith. In Ghana today, as with Nigeria and other African countries where this new movement is widespread, prophets are prophesying even elections results! (Omoregbe 1993:179-180). How does this ensure national development? The chapter argues that it is not every prophecy that must be believed; for some prophecies are either fallacious or are not based on the authority of the source (or object) of worship. A prophecy, according to Philips (1996:277-278) is a religious (or spiritual) prediction made by a prophet, under divine inspiration (having a direct message from the object of worship, my own insertion). It is a form of mystical experience that somehow allows the person to perceive or feel related to a divine realm, receive a divine message, and so forth (Peterson, et al 2007:646). A prophet is someone who speaks by divine inspiration; someone who predicts the future, as he or she is inspired by the object of worship – they (prophets) belong to the category of diviners, seers and mediums (Mbiti 1969:248). Again, the chapter asserts that most of these prophets engage in rhetoric and rather seek to make the followers poorer and become burden to national development. Also, the chapter reveals that most of these religious leaders, prophets, etc. are even naïve and immature themselves in how to reveal or communicate prophecies to their followers.

The inquiry into the relationship between faith, prophesy and critical thinking cuts across diverse religious perspectives. The interpretation of a religious worldview is not fundamentally different from the cultural background of the originating religion. This cultural influence on religion, which shapes our faith and belief is brought to the fore in the observation that "the way God is conceived and portrayed in any religion is a reflection of the world-view of the culture that gave birth to that religion. For every religion without exception is the product of a culture and part of that culture (Omoregbe 1993:28).

4.2   Religion, argumentation and reasoning

Religion plays a central role in both individual and communal life. It is not surprising that Emile Durkheim defines religion as a social phenomenon (in Peterson, et al 2007:8). Following this initial description of religion, this work discusses fallacies that appear in social discourses in Ghana, within religion – the main area of social interest, as far as informal fallacies are concerned. It is very difficult to pin religion to one definition. Even so, Stephen Philips' (1996:2) definition of religion seems to appeal more to the focus of this work. According to Philips, religion is the set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human being and sacred or divinity. A given religion is defined by specific elements of a community of believers: dogmas, sacred books, rites, worship, sacrament, moral prescription, interdicts, organization. The majority of religions have developed starting from a revelation based on the exemplary history of a nation, of a prophet or a wise man who taught an ideal of life (Philips 1996:2). The word religion is derived from Latin "*religio*" (what attaches or retains, moral bond, anxiety of self-consciousness, scruple). The origin of "*religio*" is debated since antiquity. Cicero said

it comes from "*relegere*" (to read again, to re-examine carefully, to gather) (Cicero 1993:127). Whichever way we look at religion, one can infer from the descriptions above that religion is a belief in an object of worship and obeying the tenets of this object of worship. In every religion, this research holds, faith is the underlying tenet that ought to be obeyed and followed without questioning.

A new ministry in Christianity, the prophetic ministry – Christian congregations whose leaders are prophets (see the definition of prophet in my introduction of this chapter) – is gaining lots of notoriety in Ghana in particular, Africa at large and the world as a whole today. A good number of Christian leaders are either prophets or they are becoming prophets. Most of the followers of these religions are either gullible, uncritical (at least as this research and other similar literature have shown) or they don't want to question anything based on faith, since, according to them, the language of faith is fuzzy and can only be interpreted by people with "special or mystical eyes" (Omoregbe 1993:209). These prophets have taken advantage of this and are running riots with a barrage of prophecies – The level of gullibility of the followers is legendary (Peterson, et al 2007:316)! This has led to most of the followers, in their own evidence, becoming more impoverished, insolvent and impecunious than their former selves (before they accepted this new faith). What exactly is about religion that makes it easy (or attracts) for followers of a particular religion to be uncritical about what their (the religions') leaders say to them (the followers)? Could it be that every prophecy that comes from these prophets must be obeyed without questioning (Peterson, et al 2007:306)? How about the prophecy that some prominent people will die at a certain time and it did not and still does not happen or those who were prophesied to that they'll win elections and never happen(ed) (Philips

1996:314)? These questions are endless, and could go on unabated. New ones (questions) come up each day.

From time immemorial, the language to differentiate appearance from reality has been very difficult if not impossible to come by. At what time does rationality override matters of faith in religion in general and Christianity in particular? Do fallacies play a role in prophecies (Philips 1996:303)? Must we, indeed, live by faith and not by sight? What does it mean to live by faith? How do we juxtapose this with what we are told in Acts 17:11: "Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Holy Bible, New International Version)? Also, how does this "unquestioning faith" explain what we are told in Hosea 4:6 – "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou have rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me" (Holy Bible).

This diverse perception of religion is also observable in the different conceptualization of the meaning of religion as a worldview of multi-dimensional meaning to different persons and religion. However, there exist fundamental affinities between some of the notable religions of the world. They essentially seek a relationship between the human person and the God-head (Philips 1996:168). This applies to Christianity, Islam, African traditional religion or what some scholars, including Onaiyekan (2001:9), refer to as 'Godianism' (the Godianist hold the position that God manifests himself in every form of religion and they are all equally legitimate. God does not discriminate along hierarchical preferences as avenues to worship him). All religions equally attempt to elicit

positive moral attitude from their members. In realizing this, religion provides "its adherents a valid worldview and an adequate practical guide to life (Onaiyekan 2001:9).

The different religions attempt to unravel some or the truth about human existence. But the means of reaching the truth manifests divergently in different religion. Christianity, Islam, African traditional religion, the religions of the East; all seek to apprehend the truth in diverse ways. Just as every intellectual or school discipline is geared towards comprehending reality or truth from a particular scientific (in the broad or narrow sense) point of view, religion imbues itself with the capacity for providing answers to man's quest for eternal self-preservation. Many religions lay claim to being capable of providing answer to fundamental questions of human existence, the purpose of life, the nature of existence after death etc. (Mbiti 1969:282). All these point to anthropocentric nature of religion and knowledge in general "for it is centred around man's well-being both here and in the hereafter … All search for knowledge is prompted by the instinct of self-preservation, and this is what underlies all scientific investigation" (Omoregbe 1993:26–27).

Prophetic messages, which attract our attention or investigation in this chapter, is not only a Christian reality but one that permeate other religious worldview such as Islam, and African traditional religion. I have placed emphasis on Christianity in this chapter due to lack of competence in other religions. Where we find compelling relationships between Christianity and other religion, we shall include such information in our discussion.

The earliest documented appearance of Christianity in Ghana dates back to the second half of the fifteenth century (Wiltgen 1956:1). At present, different denominations, with diverse messages, rituals, attitudinal disposition and temperament co-exist in Ghana.

Aside the 'traditional' churches brought by the Missionaries (Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian Church, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Pentecost, Apostolic, etc.), we also have Churches founded by Ghanaians and other Africans (International Godsway Church, Christian Action Chapel, Church of Christ, International Central Gospel Church, Perez Chapel, Royal House Chapel, Wind and Fire Gospel church, Living Faith Church Worldwide, Christ Apostolic Church, The African Episcopal Church, Christ Embassy, Deeper Life Ministry, Cherubim and Seraphim, and a host of others) (Kodua 2004:22).

I have made no attempt to content-analyze the prophetic messages of the pastors, owners or leaders of these Churches but I have observed a general trend of prosperity prophesies with a band-wagon effect on their members. The personal lifestyle of many of the pastors (prophets) also completely deviates from the economic realities of the society that engenders them. Some of the pastors or leaders now possess private jets which some claim will facilitate evangelism. They have invested in education, agriculture, recreation, printing press, and a wide range of business activities. The opulent lifestyle and economic triumph of many of the Church owners, founders, leaders, conquerors or pastors is at variant with that of the members and Christ whom all Christians should emulate. Church members are encouraged to ceaselessly give or sow seeds into the kingdom of God. Many of these Churches, as we shall see later in the examples discussed in this chapter, in God's name, collect money in form of offering, tithe, thanksgiving, harvest, first seed, sacrificial offering and many other forms of occasional collections. They prophesy into the lives of members, reminding them that God loves the cheerful giver and some of the prophesies involve applying subtle or overt threat in their

ministration such as reminding worshippers that they rob God by not paying their tithe and the consequences that will occur for failure to pay tithe (Malachi, 3:7ff.).

It is against the backdrop of some existential tension in some Christian practices that I have always wished to examine a more fundamental issue of the relationship between faith and critical thinking with a view to understanding if this will facilitate personal and national development. Before this stated objective, I wish to observe that there exists a metaphysical temperament or fundamental seed of aggression in the teaching of some or many among the religious worldviews. Though Christianity and Islam claim to be peaceful religions and there abound passages to support this view, the Bible also asserts that all those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will be condemned (John 3:18; 14:6) while the Qur'an claims that the fire of hell awaits those who refuse to be Moslems (Koran 35;33). If both religions claim to be revealed word of God, both cannot be correct at the same time. Also, the 'Godianist' or the African traditional religious practitioner cannot be excused from religious violence; "Inherent in the nature of these African (and other world) religions is the use or the threat of the use of ritual violence as preventive or offence weapon against real or imaginary enemies" (Okedeji 1999/2000:7). *Godianism*, according to Onaiyekan, is synonymous to African traditional religion. *Godianism*, like African traditional religion, believes in religious pluralism – many religious groups (religions), the same God (Mbiti 1969:1). According to *Godianism*, God manifests himself in every form of religion and so, all religions are all equally legitimate. God does not discriminate along hierarchical preferences as avenues to worship him (Onaiyekan 2001:9).

An indispensable criterion for comprehending the nature of authentic prophesy is the identification of the veracity of claims. In other words, it is imperative that we make

effort in understanding the true value of prophetic claims. This may not be as simple as it appears. The quest for truth is intricately connected with the search for knowledge. This quest resonates in the Socratic dictum, "Man, know thyself" (Honer and Hunt 1969:1). Self-knowledge, here, becomes an undeniable prerequisite towards knowledge of the external world. Self-knowledge is an essential reality, a basic existential fundamental of all who are referred to as human beings. Pope John Paul II beautifully captures this view in his introductory remark to the Encyclical Letter, *Faith and Reason*: "… the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, … This is why all that is the object of our knowledge becomes a part of our life" (Pope John Paul II. 1998:2). The quest for truth and knowledge was brought to the fore in Pontius Pilate's interrogation of Jesus Christ. Pilate asks, (in John 18:38, the Holy Bible): "What is truth"? This was a question he asked Jesus in response to Jesus' claim that he is a witness to the truth. The undeniable value of truth is observable in the entire subject matter of epistemology – the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature, source, scope, acquisition, limitations and validity of knowledge and truth (Honer and Hunt 1969:56**).**

To discern the truth of prophetic messages, one needs a critical mind-set. The challenge of applying critical thinking to faith discourses seems apparent in the realization of some fundamental differences between faith and critical thinking. While faith is generally defined as accepting without doubting revealed truth – faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (The Holy Bible; Hebrews 11:1) – its nature could allow for manipulation and betrayal. Our inability to confirm messages coughed in esoteric spiritual framework makes it difficult to comprehend the

truthfulness of faith-based messages, as well as prophesies. Critical thinking, on the other hand, seeks a rational, objective and verifiable process of arriving at a conclusion.

I, however, posit in this chapter that the relationship between faith and reason does not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive as our religious belief and assumptions could be supported and strengthened by critical thinking and there are religious thinkers, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Anselm of Canterbury, who supported this position (Philips 1996:303). Critical thinking should stimulate faith as it enhances our ability to ask questions about our beliefs or religious assumptions with a view to being in a vantage position in making fundamental decisions about our existence. In this light, critical thinking serves as a tool to cultivate a discerning view about our religious beliefs so we can become thoughtful and astute believers. Furthermore, critical thinking's role as a subject that questions, examines and weighs options with a view to coming up with the best possible alternatives, enhances the believer's ability to decipher if the principles upon which their faith are anchored are coherent and reasonable (Ansah, et al 2016:1). Part of the problem that some societies experience is the lack of application of reason in assessing what ordinarily should be part of the human heritage – rationality. Some pastors even prophesy obviously, as the examples discussed in this chapter shall show, irrational prophesies to members and they (members or followers) accept them (the prophecies) as the gospel truth, without a shred of questioning. Images abound on the internet where pastors instruct church members to embark on what appears in some quarters, embarrassing and dehumanizing acts and based on faith alone. Some pastors even swindle members of huge sums of money and live extravagant lifestyles while many of their Church members live in abject poverty. The uncritical attitude of some believers,

either as Christians, Moslems, Traditional African Religion practitioners or any other religion calls for a more critical mind-set in religious worship as this has effect on the larger society. An uncritical intellect is not likely be in any good position to contribute to societal development. Societal development requires a rigorous thought process and maintaining an equilibrium between contrasting interests.

The human quest for knowledge and truth is part of man's innate reality of coping with existential complexities. It is a reality observable in the history of humankind over the ages and it is the goal of every scientific endeavor. Philosophy lends an unprecedented support in human quest for knowledge and development:

Driven by the desire to discover the ultimate truth of existence, human beings seek to acquire those universal elements of knowledge which enable them to understand themselves better and to advance in their own self-realization … Through philosophy's work, this ability to speculate which is proper to the human intellect produces a rigorous mode of thought; and then in turn, through the logical coherence of the affirmations made and the organic unity of their content, it produces a systematic body of knowledge (John Paul II 1998, paragraph 4).

All the narrations above indicate to us (human beings) that we need to approach religion and faith with some level of intellectual consciousness and discerning mind-set to avail ourselves of the opportunities derivable therefrom. There is no doubt that there is a symbiotic relationship between faith and reason and they both nourish their scope for better possibilities for science and faith. While religion will thrive better with adequate information and understanding about the nature of reality, science will also improve when it has faith in the possibility of a positive outcome in the process of inquiry or investigation

(Honer and Hunt 1969:2). Human beings' innate desire for truth urges them on towards a better comprehension of themselves, nature and the totality of reality. Succinctly put, Pope John Paul II makes the following observation:

The desire for truth, therefore, spurs reason always to go further; indeed, it is as if reason were overwhelmed to see that it can always go beyond what it has already achieved. It is at this point, though, that reason can learn where its path will lead in the end …The fundamental harmony between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of philosophy is once again confirmed. Faith asks that its object be understood with the help of reason; and at the summit of its searching reason acknowledges that it cannot do without what faith presents (1998: paragraph.42).

As aforesaid, the lack of knowledge, and or desire to seek meaning to prophecies is/are leading many astray and that is why this chapter has put together some of these religious discourses (mostly through prophecies) and discuss them logically to reveal the fallacies inherent in them. Hardly a day goes by in Ghana today without one hearing of one prophecy or the other – Surely, an appreciation of how to receive and comprehend prophecies will assist religious leaders and followers in handling the issue of prophecies,

4.3   Some instances of social (religious) discourses based on faith

Let us begin our discussion here with some rather eerie religious discourses that happened very recently to appreciate the nature of religious discourses today in the world as a whole and Ghana in particular:

Headline of a YouTube video reads: Pastor Orders Female Members to Remove Underwear So God Can Enter Their Bodies **–** https://youtu.be/NNg2Ug153fQ August 1, 2019 at 4:45pm.

According to the *Kenyan Daily Post* (3 March 2014 https://newsone.com/2939386/rev-njohi-female-undergarments/) "Kenyan Pastor Rev. Njohi has raised not only a few eyebrows but red flags with his unorthodox suggestion of having his female congregants remove their bras and underwear before coming to church, so that Christ can freely enter their bodies with his spirit."

Njohi, who is the pastor of the Lord's Propeller Redemption Church in Kenya, reportedly refers to undergarments as "ungodly." *The Kenyan Daily Post* reported further that "The bible-toting minister called together a meeting with church officials and allegedly discussed banning the under garments because people need to be free in body and spirit in order to receive Christ." In true fashion, the church's female population reportedly did come to church sans their undies.

A similar video of a certain pastor Mboro of South Africa continues the same discourse with this headline:

'Pastor Mboro asks members to remove their underwear and wave in church & touch their private parts' – https://youtu.be/k9rVtA5Pnj4 Thursday August 1, 2019 at 5:30pm.

According to this YouTube video, Pastor Mboro asked members of his church to remove their underwear and wave in church & touch their private parts. Many people, the story indicates, are calling out the South African Pastor for being a pervert, by asking his congregants to remove their panties and wave them in the air like some sort of ritual. To some critics' amazement, the church-goers obliged and soon started waving their panties in the air. Though it is not clear what the pastor was trying to achieve by asking the unimaginable of his congregation as the worship session is going on, however, he was heard saying, "Must we stop because somebody does not like it?"

Lots are happening today around the world concerning this subject. This chapter, as has been repeatedly indicated, has selected a couple of these happenings, particularly in Ghana, and discussed them painstakingly to demonstrate the fallacies inherent in them. The meanings of these fallacies have been given in my previous chapters so I shall not repeat them here, except in some marginal cases where I have given some summarized meanings as and when necessary.

4.4   Examples and analysis of common informal fallacies in religious discourses in Ghana

This section of the chapter concentrates on some selected religious (social) discourses and possible informal fallacies inherent in these discourses. Most of the discourses, if not all, this research holds, are based on fideism. Fideism, according to Philips, and which this research adopts, is the view that the nature of religious faith precludes rational or philosophic inquiry into the grounds (reasons), or lack thereof, for religious beliefs. Or, in some versions – where faith is not considered a matter of belief – fideism is the view that faith precludes philosophy. Where beliefs are involved, they are not held on defensible grounds but "on faith" (Philips 1996:303). The section uses case examples to illustrate the fallacies at work in some religious discourses in Ghana.

4.4.1   Appeal to pity

case example 1

The Founder and leader of Heaven's Gate Ministry in Ghana, Prophet Kumchacha, has defended what he himself calls 'spiritual killing' of two journalists in the Kumasi Metropolis for allegedly attempting to destroy his reputation. His justification is "I have worked as a pastor for twenty-nine years and during Rawlings' era, I was arrested three times for preaching, slept in Kumasi Central Police Station for about four times, and the situation was not different from Accra Central Police Station. So, building through these tough times till 29 years and for someone to use a day, a second or an hour to tarnish your image is very painful" (Kumchacha kills journalist spiritually – http://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, November 20, 2018).

The basis for which Prophet Kumchacha is said to have engaged in the spiritual killing is evidently an invocation of emotional feeling as he narrates the difficulty he had been through before assuming his present position. The conditions such as sleeping in Kumasi Police station are meant to be pitiful, for which reason he is inviting sympathizers to side with his action of, as he puts it, "spiritually killing" all journalists who criticize his pastoral style. His position is a case of appeal to pity, as he portrays that because he suffered so much before establishing his ministry, sleeping in prison homes, etc., he should be pitied by journalists in a manner that journalists are mindful of the way they talk about him. It follows the reasoning; I have worked very hard at getting to this point so I deserve a certain conclusion – praise me instead of always criticizing me.

case example 2

The Founder and Leader of the Glorious Word Power Ministry International, Reverend Isaac Owusu Bempah, in his reaction to Members of Ghana Parliament's call for action against pastors and churches preying on the gullibility of the public commits the appeal to pity fallacy:

I think an action to sanitize the pastoral front is not a bad idea but the MPs (members of parliament) must not generalize and add good pastors like myself to it. Mr. Speaker, you are Reverend Minister yourself and I believe strongly that you have been monitoring our TVs and radio stations and we all see the attitudes and behaviour of some pastors and some churches. There are big churches in the country who have made a great impact on the country. I know Nana Addo (the president of the Republic of Ghana) has pastors at heart and won't allow MPs to descend on pastors (Owusu Bempah – Don't put all pastors together to sanitize – https://www.adomonline.com. Thursday, May 30, 2019).

The pastor, Owusu Bempah, instead of giving reasons for why his church and others should be considered in lieu of the action to be taken by parliament against all churches, evokes sympathies of the Speaker of Ghana's Parliament House and the President of the Republic. The speaker being a Reverend minister, and therefore, perhaps, knowing the kind of pastor he (Owusu Bempah) is and the president having pastors at heart, even if pastors will be sanitized on their duties, he should be considered. These are not good reasons enough for Parliament to exclude some pastors when action is being taken. He is merely using emotions for reasons.

4.4.2 Argument against the person

Argument against the person is that way of responding to an argument where the respondent attacks the character related to the arguer rather than focusing on the rationale of the arguer (Honer and Hunt 1969:22). We have already shown that there are varieties of this argument. In personal attack circumstantial, the respondent alludes to circumstances that make it unfavorable to consider the arguer's position worthy of attention. The attacker brushes away a claim by merely using some personal circumstances to cast doubt on the claims at hand.

Case example 1

Headline: "You're against National Cathedral because it's not your party building it" – Duncan-Williams. The author of the article cites the following words of Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams:

"Some Christians who are against President Nana Akufo-Addo's proposed National Cathedral are doing so because it is not their political party that is building it (Duncan

Williams on National Cathedral – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, November 11, 2018).” In the same article, the Action Chapel International (ACI) founder told his congregation during the church's second Sunday service on 11th November, 2018 that he found it befuddling that Christians are the most vocal in opposing the idea of building a National Cathedral, adding that some of them are doing so purely on the basis of partisan politics.

In the example cited above, Duncan-William clearly alludes to the divisive teeth of political faction to rubbish the opposing view regarding the national cathedral. He poisons the well by claiming that because the national cathedral project is not done by critics' political party, the critics are predisposed to criticize it the way they are doing. Adopting a circumstantial attack towards an opponent's claim is fallacious because they do not reasonably support an argument except to muddy the well that produces good water (Duncan Williams on National Cathedral – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, November 11, 2018).

Case example 2

Another headline reads: '**Apostolic Fathers Commend Korankye Ankrah's Fight Against False Prophets,' –** Moeris https://www.peacefmonline.com. Wednesday, October 10, 2018.

Rev. Sam Korankye Ankrah, founder and Apostle General of Royal House Chapel International, has taken literally the fight against those he calls false prophets, charlatans, magicians and con men parading as men of God to the street. It is obvious that this has not gone down well with people in some quarters. Rev. Owusu Bempah, one

of the prophets who felt Rev. Ankrah's assertion that some men of God are false prophets, etc. was directed at him and others, has sought to singlehandedly fight against the allegations of Korankye Ankrah. The news item reports that Owusu Bempah "maligned and sought to stain the reputation of Korankye Ankrah, by peddling what the Pentecostal Council describes as lies against his (Rev. Korankye Ankrah's) person" (Moeris https://www.peacefmonline.com. Wednesday, October 10, 2018).

Even though the news item failed to provide the exact expressions that evidence the personal attack on Korankye Ankrah, the mere fact that the response from Owusu Bempah was aimed at the reputation of the opponent is unacceptable and could be described as a case of personal attack (Moeris https://www.peacefmonline.com. Wednesday, October 10, 2018).

4.4.3 Weak analogy

Weak analogy is the fallacy that occurs when an arguer compares elements that are not comparable in the relevant respect. In this regard, the conclusion drawn by the arguer is inductively improbable and hence too weak to be considered good (Ansah et al 2016:83).

Case example 1

Cathedral as important as hospitals – Joe Mettle

Award-winning gospel artist, Joe Mettle, has said that the construction of a national cathedral in Ghana is as important as building hospitals for the people, hence government should do both if it could. The gospel artist was speaking in an interview on the Class Drive on Class 91.3 FM, with Prince Benjamin on Thursday, 30th August, 2018,

on the release of his new single titled: *'My Everything*' released the same day. Asked what he thought of a national cathedral for the nation, Minister Joe Mettle said:

The argument is there, people are saying the Cathedral or the things that are needed, all of them are important, these are not decisions we make for the government, they know what they're capable of and what they can afford and what they can't afford, so, I think all of it is important, any of them is important. The argument was the fact that if we are doing the cathedral while we have other social responsibilities or other issues like hospitals and other things, they all need to be built, the hospitals are very important, the cathedral needs to be built, they need to be built (https://www.pulse.com.gh. Sunday, March 3, 2019).

Joe Mettle emphasized that both – a national cathedral and hospital to take care of sick people – are important and should be looked at concertedly. He stated: "It's important, but at the same time we should look at all of it, we can't do one and leave the other, if we can do all – cathedral and hospital, that's it (Joe Mettle – Leave those building national cathedral because they believe in it – https://www.pulse.com.gh. Sunday, March 3, 2019).

Obviously, Joe Mettle is comparing the importance of a National Cathedral with the importance of a hospital, and his conclusion yields the claim that they are both on the same pedestal. The essence of hospital is for the purposes of health delivery. However, the state cathedral is essentially meant to facilitate service to God. According to these two essences, the supposed analogous elements are at a disparity if not worlds apart. Hence, the conclusion that those two elements are on the same pedestal of social

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importance and hence requires the use of state funds in the same way is fallacious – weak analogy.

Case example 2

Johnson Asiedu Nketia, the General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), has said that he supports the move by the Nana Addo led government to build a National Cathedral for the country. President Nana Akuffo-Addo on Monday 6th March, 2017, cut sod for the commencement of the building of a National Cathedral of interdenominational worship in Ghana's capital, Accra. According to Asiedu Nketia, he does not agree with those saying that the project is a "misplaced priority" but believes that putting up such a facility would bring many advantages to the country as a whole.

I don't agree with those saying that the building of the national cathedral is a misplaced priority. We have a National Mosque for the Muslims so what's wrong with getting a National Cathedral for the Christians?" he told Kwame Afrifa-Mensah on Happy FM (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, August 15, 2019).

He added that religion is the only thing that binds us as a country together, as shown in the following remarks. "The National Cathedral is not a bad idea and we need to support it across the political spectrum. Religion is one thing that unites us together as a country" (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, August 15, 2019).

Again, in the text above in which Aseidu Nketiah articulates the rationale for building a national cathedral, we find a strong attempt of comparison being made between the existence of a National Mosque and a National Cathedral. Nonetheless, the fact that both projects are government initiative does not blur an important distinction. The national

Mosque that began in 1995 was a project funded by the Turkish government with an initial amount of 10 million dollars. Thus, unless the National Cathedral is to attract similar mode of funding, the comparison made by the General Secretary of the NDC is dissimilar in relevant respects and hence does not warrant the said conclusion. It is therefore a case of weak analogy.

Case example 3

This is the Ghanaian religious personality version of Donald Trump. How possible can this man continue to blaspheme and the so-called Christian Council sits still without saying anything? Wow a new leader and an angel! (Kwaku Mensah – Obinim is not as powerful as he claims – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Friday, May 31, 2019).

The arguer assumes that since both Trump and Obinim are leaders, and since Trump's actions project him as a threat to other nations, or a seemly arrogant president; and so is Obinim, hence both deserve not to be leaders. However, comparing a political leader to that of a religious leader is defective and fallacious, because their roles as leaders differ; especially in terms of other sources of power – political; from the people, as America is democratic (or so we are told) and religious; from God or object of worship (or so we are told).

4.4.4 Appeal to (the) masses

This fallacy is said to have occurred when we translate the popularity of an evidence into a validating case for the proposition in question. An argument (generally considered a logical fallacy) based on widespread opinions, values, or prejudices and often delivered in an emotionally charged way. Also known as *argumentum ad populum*.

Appeal to the majority is another term often used to describe a large number of people in agreement as a valid reason or argument (Honer & Hunt 1969:23).

Case example

"Having a national cathedral for 70 percent of the population, I think it is in the right direction", Bishop Titi-Offei stated. According to him, "It is important for us to note that, the Christian community in this country has played a very major role historically towards the development of the country." "The Christian communities are partners of all government to ensure development. 70 percent of Ghanaians are Christians; we built hospitals, schools, universities just to contribute to national development", the pastor mentioned (Titi-Offei – Constructing a National Cathedral for 70% of Ghana's population is a good idea – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Thursday, August 30, 2018).

For the implicit fallacy to be explicit, certain assumptions need to be first highlighted. At first sight, the conclusion that the building of a national Cathedral is in the right direction seems plausible on the anvil of utilitarian principle. That is, building a project for the interest of the majority is right. However, a further probe of the issue reveals a hidden assumption that the majority must themselves be in support of the project since you cannot satisfy the interest of the majority with a project the majority are disinterested in. Nonetheless, the connection between the popularity of the evidence (70 percent of supposed interested Ghanaian Christians) and the rightness of the construction of a National Cathedral lends the arguer to committing the fallacy of appeal to the masses. The proclamation of the masses, even though may be likely to be false (for no survey is used to solicit the views of the 70 percent Ghanaian Christians) is fallacious even if it were assumed to be true (https://www.ghanaweb.com.Thursday, August 30, 2018).

4.4.5 False cause fallacy

This fallacy is said to have occurred when a particular effect is linked to a causal process or act that probably does not exist or at least there is no reasonable proof of a causal connection between the cause and the effect (Ansah et al, 2016).

Case example 1

"Fight the construction of national cathedral and incur generational curses" - Eagle Prophet

Host of Hot FM's 'MAAKYE' Morning Show Isaac Boamah Darko, speaking with one prophet popularly called Eagle Prophet, revealed that Ghana's first President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah initiated Ghana into a dark and demonic alliance under the powers of darkness which has held the country back until now. He elaborates:

If we lift Ghana up in prayer in that building, against all evil and negative forces that have held the country back all these years, you will witness what will happen. I will say this once and again, the first President of Ghana initiated this country under the forces of darkness ... He established Ghana in a very high demonic way and any prophet of God knows what I am talking about. It is said that the one who heads a family determines the blessings and curses of the people. That is what the father of the land Dr. Kwame Nkrumah did with Ghana and now so many things are going wrong but I thank God for President Akuffo-Addo, God will guide him to build the National Cathedral and all altars of the devil will break ... I talk as the prophet

of God (Isaac Boamah Darko – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, August 28, 2018).

The prophet, so called by the publication, alludes to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the initiator of Ghana into demonic activities. The publications, however, failed to state the causal factors of the demonic consequences. He is however convinced that the construction of a National Cathedral is linked to an attempt at exorcising the country from such initial demonic engulfment as he writes "That is what the father of the land Dr. Kwame Nkrumah did with Ghana and now so many things are going wrong but I thank God for President Akuffo-Addo, God will guide him to build the National Cathedral and all altars of the devil will break". He further alleges that lifting the country up in prayers in the national cathedral to be constructed will bring significant progress in the future.

Two causal relations can be identified in the text, both of which lack adequate grounds for such pronouncement. First, there are no reasonable grounds for associating the building of the National Cathedral to the destruction of demonic activities into which Ghana was plunged or had been plunged by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Secondly there are also no reasonable grounds for believing that the mere construction of a building and prayerful activities therein, without policy implementation, change in attitude etc. on the part of the nationals can lead to any future development. The case made by the prophet could, thus, be said to be drawing a false connection between development and the building of a National Cathedral, thereby, committing the false cause fallacy.

Case example 2

Shatta Wale will die on 24th December 2018 – A Prophet claims

An unnamed man of God, a website holds, has said that four major accidents involving Yutong Buses would occur on the Accra-Kumasi road, in Ghana. According to the prophet, the cause of these accidents is a particular political party. As we explained earlier, concerning false cause fallacy that if one fails to provide very good and cogent reasons for linking two things as one causing the other, one commits this fallacy; we see here that there is not any well explained relation between a political party and the occurrence of a road accident. The absence of the details regarding the causal relation between a political party and road accidents gives a clear indication of an imagined causal relation on the part of the so-called man of God. Thus, unless further and better particulars are provided, the rationale can best be treated as a case of false cause fallacy (Kwaku Nti – https://www.ghananewspage.com. Monday, December3, 2018).

Case example 3

The Leader of the Church of Rabbi, Prophet Kwabena Tawiah, has alleged that the former President of the Republic of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, is to blame for the recent accidents at Circle, Kwame Nkrumah Interchange, Accra. He commits (with his allegation) the false cause fallacy:

There are some spirits working against Ghana, Dr Nkrumah planted Ghana's protection spirit at Circle, those days there were no accidents, but John Mahama took that protection spirit out and planted Dubai gods there to kill people for his selfish interests. I'm telling John Mahama, he's an occult, I'm a prophet; I don't fear him, it's true the gods he planted at Circle are haunting Ghanaians, people get killed in the rains because of the gods he planted at Circle (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, June 4, 2019).

Prophet Kwabena Tawiah's argument is fallacious in the sense that the events he is claiming to be and not to be cause of the accidents are poor to support his position. The fact that there weren't or were few accidents in the era of Nkrumah, and more accidents after Mahama's reconstruction of the Circle Interchange, is not good evidence that the latter has planted gods there. Probably, the increase in population and vehicles might be a contributive factor, and so on.

4.4.6 Missing the point

This fallacy occurs when the premise of an argument supports some conclusion; however, a non-related vague and misplaced conclusion is drawn in place of the right conclusion (Honer & Hunt 1969:24).

Case example

In the same reportage, the reportage on the prophecy indicated above by the Eagle Prophet that Ghana would have to construct a national cathedral to lift a prayer to God to deliver us from some curse Kwame Nkrumah brought on Ghana, the prophet seems to be advancing the point that prayer is necessary in bringing development as he said "If we lift Ghana up in prayer in that building, against all evil and negative forces that have held the country back all these years, you will witness what will happen" (Isaac Boamah Darko – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, August 28, 2018). However, even if we make a generous concession that this claim is true, it misses the point in the sense that the need for prayers does not support the need for a National Cathedral, which is provided as a conclusion. In fact, same goal can be achieved through the declaration of a day of prayer where all nationals could be encouraged to pray at their various homes

or even churches since God does not reside in one specified building (National Cathedral). And in fact, does development really depend on prayers? How about nations that do not pray and or do not or may not believe in prophecies in particular and the Christian God in general? The supposed fact that we need prayers and the call for National Cathedral exhibit a manifest disconnect which ought to be described for what it is, fallacy of missing the point.

4.4.7 Begging the question

A good argument permits a linear relationship between (the) premise(s) and (the) conclusion. Based on this, the premise(s) provide(s) support for the acceptance or otherwise of the conclusion and not vice versa. Any argument where the premise(s) support(s) the conclusion and the conclusion in turn supports the validity of the premise(s) breaches the kind of linear relation expected in an argument and is therefore a fallacy called circular reasoning (Honer and Hunt 1969:23). That is to say, where the conclusion is a restatement of the premise(s), the argument commits the fallacy aforesaid – begging the question or circular reasoning (Ansah et al, 2016).

Case example 1

The Archbishop and General Overseer of the Action Chapel International (ACI) ministry, Archbishop Duncan William, has asked Ghanaians to ready themselves for a prosperous 2019. "I believe 2019 is the year of the harvest and year of multiplication," he said. [But] if you are not prepared you can be in a situation of blessing and still miss it…," he said (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Monday, December 31, 2018).

Obviously, the Archbishop has a firm conviction about 2019 as the year of harvest. it is a claim he stands by, a conclusion for that matter. However, a close look at the supporting proposition reveals that the supporting proposition itself has no reasonable support except we assume the truth of the conclusion. In other words, the claim that "if you are not prepared you can be in a situation of blessing and still miss it" is only true if the conclusion "2019 is a year of harvest" is assumed to be true. As such, one can see clearly that the premise is being supported by the conclusion and the conclusion also supported by the premise and hence a case of circular reasoning

(https://www.ghanaweb.com. Monday, December 31, 2018).

Case example 2

The conversation below is another case of circular reasoning:

Jacob: I don't think it is a crime for one to misquote a statement or commit an error in quoting a scripture.

William (Re): Bro. It is very serious to misquote the word of God. We are talking about the word of the Almighty God here (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Wednesday, May 15, 2019).

In the conversation above, William simply restates the conclusion as the premise, vice versa. The actual support for the conclusion is not apparent, hence such argument is said to beg the question or reasoning in circle. William assumes that nothing more is needed to support the conclusion, which renders the argument fallacious.

4.4.8 Appeal to force

Appeal to force or threat is a fallacy that occurs when an arguer poses a conclusion and further suggests either implicitly or explicitly that some harm will befall whosoever refuses to accept the given conclusion (Ansah et al 2016:30).

Case example 1

"Shatta Wale will die on 24th December" – An unnamed man of God (pastor) claims

A supposed pastor, according to ghanaweb, issued some prophecy for Shatta Wale, a popular Ghanaian musician. He (the pastor) said, "God said I should tell Shatta Wale that if he is not very careful and cautious, he will be involved in an accident in December 2018 and die." The man of God continued that if the musician did not do anything about this, the prophecy will come to pass and no one can do anything about it (Kwaku Nti – https://www.ghananewspage.com. Monday, December 3, 2018).

In the prophecy, we are told that a certain doom, an accident for that matter, will befall Shata Wale if he fails to be careful in his ways. As we have already mentioned, whenever an arguer moves his opponent to accept his (the arguer's) conclusion by invoking standby harm, the arguer in question is said to be committing the fallacy of appeal to threat or force as this prophecy and the directive that if the musician fails to be careful with his life or do something about the prophecy, he will die, could be said to be committing.

Case example 2

Another news headline reads: "You've dug your own grave by 'touching' Chief Imam" – Islamic Cleric Toppoh to Prophet Owusu Bempah.

An Islamic Cleric, Sheikh Iddrisu Toppoh has said the Founder and leader of the Glorious Word Ministry, Rev Isaac Owusu Bempah, has dug his own grave by his prophesy on the death of the National Chief Imam and other personalities in 2019, sankofaonline.com has filed. His threatening of the Prophet is blatant in his further claim that "The National Chief Imam is 100 years old and his death isn't a prophecy. Owusu Bempah should only pray to God to grant him even half of the blessed years of Sheikh Nuhu Sharubutu (the chief Imam)". The Cleric's comment is a reaction to Owusu Bempah's prophecy of doom on the life of the Chief Imam. The comment harbors some implicit threat of short life span on the part of the Prophet for if it were not so, then there was no reason for the suggestion that the man of God had dug his own grave by issuing such prophecies about the chief Imam. Again, instead of the Islamic Cleric engaging the prophet on what should be done about the prophecy, the cleric rather tells the prophet that he (the prophet) will die first if he continues giving such prophecies about the chief Imam (Chief Imam will die in 2019 – https://www.sankofaonline.com. Wednesday, January 2, 2019).

Case example 3

The General overseer of the Hope Generation Ministry International, Eric Nana Akwasi Amponsah, popularly known as Prophet Computer Man, in his response to Parliament's steps to come out with legislation to clamp down or regulate what they term as abuse of congregants, especially by 'one-man' Churches, commits the appeal to threat or force fallacy:

It's the duty of the Christian Council to regulate activities of churches but not parliamentarians. The wrath of God would fall upon the country if government forcefully close down churches (https://www.modernghana.com. Friday May 31, 2019).

The prophet should have rather given reasons why the Christian Council is the appropriate authority to regulate activities of churches, or why parliament is not the appropriate authority for that course. Rather, he chose to threaten the country with the wrath of God if parliament fails to consent and or accept his position. He relies on threat to win a consent, which is fallacious.

4.4.9 Appeal to ignorance fallacy

The Founder of the International Godsway Church, Bishop Daniel Obinim claims that no religious leader comes close to him when it is about being powerful the world over. In his argument, the Bishop commits the appeal to ignorance fallacy - a supposition that something is likely to be true because we cannot prove that it is false or vice versa (Honer and Hunt 1969:22):

The gift that is with me if we take into the spiritual realm, the whole world it has never happened. What I am saying is not in the Bible so if I say them and you insult me, I am not bothered…I am the only person who can turn myself into a dog, snake and other animals to execute what the spirit wants me to do (Obinim claims he is more powerful than any other prophet the world over – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, May 5, 2019).

The fact that we may not know what happens in the spiritual realm, or the mere fact that this cannot be found in the Bible, or no one else has been seen turn into a dog,

snake other animals (except perhaps in movies), yet, are not sufficient reasons for his position. His position rests on lack of evidence, which renders the argument fallacious. Again, the Founder and leader of the International Godsway Church, Bishop Daniel Obinim, bragging that if Ghanaians dare him, he will buy five private jets, commits another case of the appeal to ignorance fallacy:

No pastor has opened his mouth in Ghana to say that he is richer than Obinim, and no one can ever say that. Like I will make them know how wealthy I am, unless the government investigates me. Like I will bring five airplanes to Ghana in this month of June, if you like dare me (https://www.atinkaonline.com. Wednesday, June 5, 2019).

Because no pastor claims to be richer than him (according to him), doesn't mean that there is no pastor richer than he is; or because no pastor has come yet to say that doesn't mean no pastor can ever do. His claim is based on lack of evidence, which is fallacious – *argumentum ad ignoratiam*.

4.4.10 Accent

The General Overseer of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), Pastor Mensa Otabil, is quoted to have said that some Bible verses are "utterly stupid and senseless", during one of his sermons. This is a case of fallacy of accent:

This fallacy is committed as a result of change in emphasis given to the quoted words or terms used. This fallacy may also arise from the confusion of words which are spelt alike but differ in spoken accentuation (Hamblin 1970:22). Let's consider some of the quotes from the pastor that lead to this fallacy:

Why should the Bible say that, if someone slaps you on the left, you should turn the right to the person as well? It doesn't make sense, which of you can do that? (however) the nonsense of God is (still) wiser than the sense of men (https://www.ghanaguardian.com. Tuesday, May 28, 2019).

A subtle inference of the above quote would lead to the conclusion drawn above; thus, some verses of the Bible are "utterly stupid and senseless". However, a thorough analysis of the quote or the argument, or reading the whole sermon given by the pastor clearly shows that he meant to say otherwise – as he said it in an advisory manner; advising his congregant not to take the Bible literally. The sermon indicates that the pastor admonishes his members not to take the literal meaning of some verses in the Bible, rather, they should take such verses figuratively. However, using a figurative language in explaining his point led to this fallacy. This fallacy results when a passage is quoted out of context and a conclusion is drawn out of that, as in this case.

4.4.11 Straw man

A social commentator referred to as, Big Digger Small Digger, commenting on Prophet Kwabena Tawiah's claim that the recent accidents at the Nkrumah Interchange, Accra, is because Mahama, former president of the Republic of Ghana, planted Dubai gods there (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday June 4, 2019), commits the straw man fallacy:

Love your comment, if there are no gods at Dubai, how can Mahama get that gods from Dubai? This man is indirectly referring to Muslims as gods' worshipers. Our beloved Ghana was the most peaceful Country in the world but now because of these fake pastors

we are having among ourselves as humans, our peace is shrinking (https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, June 4, 2019).

Mr. Big Digger Small Digger has distorted the Prophet's position by presenting a refutable position. His position that if there are no gods in Dubai, then the prophet insinuates that Muslims are gods' worshippers, is a distortion of the former argument. He creates his own argument and goes ahead to refute same; thereby, committing the straw man fallacy.

4.5   Conclusion

All in all, one can say without a shred of equivocation that one social area that has seen and continue to see lots of debates in Ghana today is religion. Africans generally, indeed, and Ghanaians in particular, are notoriously religious (Mbiti 1969:1) Our social life is so heavily defined by religion that what a religious system, group, organization, institution, etc., says about us as a continent (Africa) in general and Ghanaians in particular, we believe, reveals a great deal about what we take life to be and our relationship to this life. Hence, the credibility of a religion, according to Kunhiyop (2008:374), is closely linked to its ability to explain God and evil associated with man. But how can one know and or identify a credible religion? This question, if we are able to answer, perhaps, may go a very long way in helping us identify and deal with possible uncritical discourses that may lead to fallacies from religion and religious groups and their leaders. This chapter has looked at some selected fallacies that appear in religious discourses in Ghana. Indeed, lots of things are going on in the world as a whole, Africa

at large and Ghana in particular, as far as religion is concerned – from religious leaders who predict national elections results, which always contradict as different religious leaders give different predictions (Pastor A says political party A will win and Pastor B says political party B will win; whose prediction should we believe as credible?) to those who ask members of their congregation not to marry from a certain tribe and so on. The examples used are mostly from the Christian Religion (Christianity) because that is where there is so much controversy (in terms of the discourses) and what followers are subjected to do (mostly, without any shred of understanding and or questioning why they are asked to do the things they are asked to do). The chapter has revealed that because religious discourses are fuzzy (as they are mostly based on faith), it is very difficult to determine whether indeed what is being said is from the object of worship or not. Even so, on the basics of critical analysis, one can detect a number of flaws in the form of fallacies in these religious discourses. It is against this backdrop that this chapter selected the most ubiquitous ones – informal fallacies – as they appear in these discourses to discuss. The unfortunate thing is that, because most of the followers of religion 'follow faith' rather than 'reason' (that is even if they understand 'faith' at all), they are easily indoctrinated and they end up doing whatever thing they are asked to do, however unreasonable (if we subject what they are asked to do to logical reasoning). The next chapter of this thesis discusses possible implications (negative, and positive) to the fallacies in these political (as discussed in chapter 3) and religious (as discussed in this chapter – chapter 4) discourses.

Chapter Five

Possible Implications of Informal fallacies in socio-political discourse

5.1   Introduction

Logic and critical thinking ordinarily attempt to classify the structure of statements, arguments and discourses through the study of formal systems of inference and through the study of arguments in natural language. Even so, since its inception, the scope of logical reasoning has been restricted, largely, to interpretation of the formal aspect that we often lose sight of the informal aspect. The motivation for this work has been to show the importance or otherwise of logical reasoning in general and informal fallacies in particular to socio-political discourses. The work so far, has presented an exploration of some common informal fallacies that appear in some socio-political discourses in Ghana. This final chapter, before my concluding chapter, presents a detailed and incisive implications of fallacies in socio-political discourses – positive and negative implications; and how to detect and avoid fallacies in socio-political discourses.

5.2   Positive implications of informal fallacies in socio-political discourses

In logic in particular and everyday life in general, fallacies work because they make messages feel more persuasive. In socio-political discourses, audiences and listeners often have a feel for whether an argument (if any), and in this case socio-political discourse, is valid, but they can't rely on gut sense alone in a culture that takes a no-holds-barred approach to arguments and or socio-political discourses. Advertising, politics and social commentaries all require rhetorical devices to convince people that

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their arguments (discourses) are valid and or more embracing. Ideally, persuaders – politicians, religious leaders, social commentators, etc. – use facts, reasoning and logic to prove their points, but they're always tempted to take a shortcut and make their case with logical fallacies — assertions that seem plausible but collapse under scrutiny. However, understanding these fallacies and knowing how to use them in socio-political discourses put you at a vantage point as opposed to your opponents who may not have this understanding. This gives you advantage over the others who may not have this understanding.

Understanding fallacies that frequently appear in socio-political discourses can help audiences, listeners and readers evaluate the credibility of marketing messages, political speeches (or commentaries), social commentaries, activists' appeals, religious activities and research sources. And they can use this knowledge to strengthen their persuasive decisions and earn better appreciations of these discourses.

Even the youngest audiences, listeners and readers can be taught to see the problems with fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses such as *ad-hominem* (insulting the man – your political opponent, etc.), slippery slope or appeals to emotion. As these audiences develop an intuitive sense of fairness, they can expand their understanding of persuasive speeches and or discourses.

It can be eye-opening for audiences, listeners and readers to see that these persuasive socio-political discourses, commercials, communications, etc. often have little data or content. Instead, they rest their entire argument on our emotional connection with certain persuasions, rhetoric, music and images.

Having audiences, listeners and readers of socio-political discourses examine a piece of writing, speech, discourse, etc. that contains fallacies is particularly helpful.

Political debates form great resource because politicians are fans of either/or, strawman, red herring and *ad-hominem* arguments. Showing audiences, listeners and readers fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses – political interviews or debates from a variety of politicians – can help them see that fallacies are common in our everyday life.

Religious discourses also present us with another form of resource because religious communications are difficult, if not impossible to understand, as this work has shown. For a great many religious people, Peterson, et al (2007:89) hold, religion is fundamentally a matter of faith – of belief and trust in God, in the teachings of one's religion, and in the institutions and practices that the religion holds to be important: Religion is built on faith and not reason. However, this position – religion is built on faith but not reason – poses serious problems and implications to religious followers. How do they (the followers) know the proper relationship, if any, between faith and religion? How does one know the rational status of religious belief? Can the truths of religious beliefs be proved? This work proposes that religion is or has become very important in the world today and so, it is very imperative for religious followers to know exactly what they believe in, and not to accept anything and everything, all in the name of faith in religion.

Ultimately, audiences, listeners, readers, among others, need to understand that the presence of a fallacy does not necessarily negate an argument. While arguers should strive for fallacy-free persuasion, sometimes fallacies rear their ugly heads anyway. When it happens, audiences, listeners, readers, and so on, should be able to identify and

understand the fallacy, but they should also know it may be one flaw in an otherwise well-constructed argument and or discourse. Learning to identify these fallacies can help them ensure that their own persuasive pieces use the best possible evidence with as few flaws as possible.

Fallacies are used by public speakers to enrich their language. Politicians and social commentators are, at least, assumed to be rhetors and must therefore be able to use *pathos* (the use of emotional appeals to alter the audience's judgement); and that is why they can use fallacies to evoke strong emotions in the audience (Capaldi 1973:12).

In socio-political discourses in Ghana, fallacies are used to disseminate ideas (be in political campaigns, advertisements, etc.) and information for the purpose of inducing or intensifying specific attitudes and actions. Political activists and social commentators in Ghana may use, perhaps, fallacies as techniques, whether in writing, speech, music, etc. to influence the opinions, attitudes, or behaviours of a group for the benefit of the person or organization (and in this case, political party, social group, etc.) using it. The goal of a socio-political discourse in Ghana today, it could be said, is to mould opinion or behaviour to support their cause without concern for the interest or benefit of the audience. And this, political and social commentators use fallacies to achieve – the aim of persuading or influencing their audience through the use of informal fallacies - to a very appreciable extent.

One other positive implication of the use of fallacies, to the benefit of political activists and social commentators, is to try to influence audience, listeners, readers, and the like, by deliberately manipulating logic to promote their (the speakers) cause. Stated differently, logical reasoning enhances the effectiveness of an argument and the ethos

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(how the character and credibility of a speaker influence an audience to consider him to be believable) (Uduma 2008:63) of the speaker or writer. Errors in arguments, or fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses, indicate that one's thinking is not well reasoned and entirely trustworthy. Some political activists and social commentators deliberately use errors in arguments, speeches, interactions, and presentations, to appeal to the emotions of their audience (target). Consider the hypothetical example below to see how fallacies can be used in socio-political discourses to the benefit of socio-political commentators:

> All elected presidents in Ghana in the 4th Republic of Ghana have been given two terms (8 years).
>
> All my predecessors were able to accomplish their mandate in two terms.
>
> Therefore, I also deserve two terms to be able to accomplish my mandate; of course, every leader must be given equal opportunity.

To test the logic of an argument like the one above, as we discussed in chapter two of this work, is to see if the conclusion makes sense. The premise(s) may be the case but will they warrant/necessitate the conclusion? Having looked at possible positive implications of fallacies in socio-political discourses, we turn now to look at some possible negative implications.

5.3   Negative implications of informal fallacies in socio-political discourses

This section discusses negative implications of fallacies in socio-political discourses. Fallacies have hindered the development of many third world countries. Some politicians use fallacies to ensure that the citizens vote for them or agree with their policies even though these policies may not have substantive basis. The use of fallacies can go

as far as persuading a person to support another person's policies without having knowledge on the policy whatsoever. Consequently, if citizens are not aware of the fallacies that the politicians use to persuade them (the citizens), 'wrong' and 'corrupt' people will end up leading the nation. It is important for us to know the negative effects or implications of fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses in order to enable members of the society to accept logical policies and arguments. Politicians reveal their policies to the public and argue to accept or deny the policies that the other candidates present. I have scrutinized some presidential and other political debates in Ghana and discussed various use of fallacies by presidential aspirants and politicians. The aspirants use these fallacies to persuade the audience to either vote for them or as a rebuttal against the policies of other aspirants.

Fallacies are not only prominent in Third World countries but in all socio-political discourses regardless of the location of the society. Donald Trump, the president of the United States of America has committed some fallacies in his speeches and writings. He does this either to persuade the public to accept his opinion or defend actions or decisions that the public may not agree with.

> Trump tweets:
>
> a. Wacky @NYTimesDowd, who hardly knows me, makes up things that
> I never said for her boring interviews and column. A neurotic dope!
> b. With all of the jobs I am bringing back into the U. S. (even before taking
> office), with all of the new auto plants coming back into our country and
> with the massive cost reductions I have negotiated on military purchases
> and more, I believe the people are seeing the big stuff
> (www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKp3k_8h8Qc/14/04/2019/12:15).

Indicated above are perfect examples of logical fallacies – ranging from *ad hominem* to *petitio principii* – found in some recent speeches of President Donald Trump of the United States of America. Our understanding of these sorts of reasoning helps us to know the methods speakers use to persuade their listeners. In the first tweet above (tweet a), Trump attacks the New York Times journalist. Here, Trump does not address the alleged false information that he claims the New York Times journalist makes, however, he attacks the journalist's personality. The second tweet does not commit the personal attack fallacy, but begging the question fallacy – *petitio principii.* This is a fallacy that is committed when one restates the premise(s) of an argument as the conclusion. Trump seems to be praising the developmental projects that he has brought into the United States of America since taking office. The last phrase he uses in the tweet; "big stuff," is a restatement of the premise of the argument.

In socio-political discourses, fallacies undermine arguments. Some politicians are fond of presenting fallacious arguments in order to manipulate and or persuade the public to vote for them. This in turn undermines the argument(s) in political discourses (speeches) of these politicians. For instance, a politician who has a good case to represent but ends up appealing to popularity, would, in the long run, make his arguments unacceptable. For example, a politician may not have any political message but he or she may be very popular or liked by the majority of the electorates. He or she may base on this and say, for instance, 'vote for me, as you can see, I am the most popular among all the aspirants.' Cases of this nature have negative implications on the society or socio-political discourses. People who have no knowledge of fallacies will be manipulated and or persuaded to vote for such a politician. This means that these members of the public will vote for a

candidate/aspirant, with no substantive message because they (the voters) may have been misled.

Most socio-political discourses amongst public figures and politicians, this work holds, are plagued with fallacies. Upon scrutinizing the 2012 Ghana presidential debate (a debate prior to general elections in Ghana, involving presidential aspirants whose political parties have parliamentarians in the Parliament House of Ghana; a debate organized by IEA – Institute of Economics Affairs), three fallacies could be said to be prevalent during the discussions that took place amongst the presidential candidates/aspirants. Red herring, begging the question and straw man fallacies were generally used in the debate. The candidates did not provide precise and concise answers to the questions posed to them, and thus missed the point or digressed when answering the questions. Again, some candidates were uncomfortable with the manner in which the questions were asked and thus committed the straw man fallacy in answering (or attempting to answer) the questions. They failed to answer the questions directly, but rather focused on distorting the nature of the question. I will provide dialogue examples of some of the fallacies committed.

I will start with the straw man fallacy and begging the question fallacy. During the first round of the debate, the moderator of the event asked the candidates a question on decentralization. John Dramani Mahama commits the straw man fallacy in his response to the question. An extract of the dialogue is presented below

> Moderator: Mr. President, the question is how, what strategies would you use?

Mahama: The question is a bit awkward for me, because what would you ask, I am doing already, I have been the chairman of the decentralization oversight committee and we have done phenomenal [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dDlulbj2jA&t=2298s/15/04/2019/10:12].

The dialogue between Mahama and the moderator shows a clear form of straw man fallacy: Mahama distorts the nature of the question that had been asked by the moderator. The moderator wished to know what strategies Mahama will use in aiding decentralization. Take note: the moderator in no way insinuated that Mahama did not have any strategy during his term of office. The moderator's focus was to find out from all the candidates, regardless of the fact that one of the candidates was president, how they would bring decentralization to the government. Therefore, Mahama clearly distorts the statement made by the moderator by thinking the moderator was insinuating that he, Mahama, did not have any decentralization strategies during the previous term of office. Not only did he distort it, he also exaggerated the extent of the question. Nana Addo, the current President of the republic of Ghana and who was a presidential aspirant then, in 2012, also fell victim to a different fallacy, which is begging the question fallacy. His case is presented below:

Moderator: Nana Addo, the question is how, what strategies would you use to advance the decentralization agenda in your tenure, if you are elected President of Ghana?

Nana Addo: Yet another very important question for the future of our country. My understanding of decentralization is that we are talking about the devolution of power…we need to have the commitment, then we need to have the recognition that we need to do a great deal to enhance the capability of the local governments we have at the moment (www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dDlulbj2jA&t=2298s/15/04/2019/10:12).

The question asked for strategies that would be used to enhance decentralization, however, the opening statement made by Nana Addo commits the begging the question fallacy. This is consistent throughout his response. Devolution of power is a synonym for decentralization. That is, devolution of power is another way of referring to decentralization. He concludes by talking about commitment and enhancing the capabilities of the local government. Commitment and enhancing the local government are not strategies but individual traits that should be cultivated amongst the members of the society. The question referred to what means one would use to bring decentralization to the government. Thus, Nana Addo did not answer the question but rather begged it – the question. However, lack of knowledge of fallacies on the part of the audience, will make them accept a response that had highlighted "any strategies" that will help in enhancing decentralization. Thus, there is a probability that some people in the society may vote for an election candidate based on the response he/she offers on decentralization. That is, they (voters) will be voting with no (or, maybe, very little) substantive reason(s).

The second round of the presidential debate was based on Ghana's natural resources and science and technology. Mr. Hassan Ayariga, also a presidential aspirant then, committed the red herring fallacy when answering the question on science and technology. The dialogue below illustrates his case:

Moderator: What are your plans to place science and technology at the core of Ghana's economic development?

Ayariga: Let us be worried about the quality of education that we want to deliver to our people… The University of Science and

Technology is there to equip, to provide science and technology and equip our students on technological based subjects. Today if you go to the university of science and technology, even the lift in the building is spoiled and they are responsible for such causes…The gentleman we call Asafo Kantanka, has been able to produce and manufacture cars in Ghana, both the NPP and NDC governments have not been able to resource this gentleman to be able to employ more students and teach them the knowledge that he has regarding science and technology

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dDlulbj2jA&t=2298s/15/04/2019/10:12).

The focus of the question is how one could make science and technology vital part of the Ghanaian economy. Clearly Hassan Ayariga digressed from the issue by talking about the problem with the lift in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, how that University has courses to deal with Science and Technology, etc. He digressed further as he began to talk about Asafo Kantaka and his production of cars in Ghana. The interest of the state is to know how to make science and technology the core of the Ghanaian economy. Ayariga did not discuss this in his response. Ayariga did not talk about how to make science and technology an integral part of the economy of Ghana, etc. He rather pointed out specific problems and successes in the areas of science and technology.

Finally, I will look at an interview on a program known as 'Hot Issues', a program aired on TV 3, a local TV channel in Ghana. The host interviewed John Mahama and Nana Addo. During the beginning of the interview, Mahama committed the fallacy of personal attack. Instead of answering the question on what he would do to get the

economy to develop, he attacked Nana Addo's government. The dialogue between them in the interview is presented below:

> Moderator: Mr. Mahama what would you do differently to get the economy back on track?
>
> Mahama: Before I begin to talk about us, NDC, I would just want to chip in what Nana and his NPP would do if they won… they will come out and say, gentlemen, unfortunately we did not know the true state of the economy, so all the promises we made to you, unfortunately we cannot deliver and in the medium to long term we are going to deliver. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB4x0_LrxHA/15/04/2019/10:12).

Mahama assumed that if Nana's party won, they would come up with excuses because they would not be able to deliver on their promises made. Again, this can also be seen as fallacious. This statement can psychologically affect the audience. That is, some people watching could be persuaded to vote for Mahama's party due to the straw man that Nana Addo's party may not deliver on their policies and promises.

5.4   Detecting and avoiding fallacies in socio-political discourses

In order for one to be able to detect fallacies, one has to be able to identify the reasons why fallacies are committed. There are no specific reasons why people commit fallacies in socio-political discourses. This may be due to the numerous intentions the person may have for intentionally or unintentionally raising arguments that are flawed. Fallacies are however, not in all occasions intentional (Hurley 2006:112). This is because an arguer may genuinely raise arguments with the aim to convince his or her listener or

opponents. But these arguments unknown to him or her are flawed. Subsequent discussions in this thesis aim at identifying a number of factors that lead (or may lead) one to commit a fallacy in an argument. This shall be used as a basis to identify how fallacies can be detected and avoided.

5.4.1 Detecting or identifying fallacies

The basic reason behind the distortion of an argument is the intent of the arguer. In this sense, the arguer may be aware of the error in the argument he or she raises but goes ahead with it because of the benefits that he or she may derive from the fallacy (Hurley 2006:153). Fallacies like false dichotomy, appeal to force, appeal to pity, and appeal to the masses can be used by an arguer to promote his or her intentions – to insight, to create mob mentality, to threaten, etc. In the instance that follows, we see a case of a lawyer who uses the emotions of pity intentionally to reduce the sentence of his or her client.

The court case that led to the conviction of Abuga Pele, a top government official of the erstwhile NDC (National Democratic Congress Party in Ghana) administration led by the former President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, and Philip Assibit, a private service provider, presents an instance of a fallacy (Abuga Pele, Assibit jailed 18 years – https://www.myjoyonline.com. Wednesday, February 28, 2018). The two who had since 2014 been before court got sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for a number of counts. Mr. Pele is alleged to have entered into an agreement with Mr. Assibit to put in false claims for payments to the tune of 3.3million Ghana cedis as service provided the then National Youth Employment Policy (NYEP), and developing an exit program and securing a grant

of 65million cedis from the World Bank. This agreement made Pele to make payments when no work had been done. Before the sentence of the two, their lawyers made the plea that the presiding judge, Justice Afia Serwaah Asare Botwe should be lenient with the sentences. The legal counsel for Philip Assibit, Lawyer Kwaku Paintsil, asked that the sentence be reduced since, "the prisons are full and his client is a chief and an entrepreneur who has "unnumbered children." This latter part of the lawyer's statement presents instances of appeal to pity. Focusing on the part that appeals to pity, it can be seen that it was the intent of the lawyer to distort his argument to have a ruling in his favour although he knew very well that pity is not meant to take his client out of the situation, he (Philip Assibit) finds himself in.

Emotional dispositions of a person can also lead to the commissioning of a fallacy (Hurley 2006:141). A situation affecting a person raises some emotions in the person depending on the specific situation. A person may decide to raise arguments based on the emotions arising from the situation. This may end up in a fallacy. There can be the emergence of an appeal to pity from such emotional dispositions. The situation of Abuga Pele and Philip Assibit (Abuga Pele, Assibit jailed 18 years – https://www.myjoyonline.com. Wednesday, February 28, 2018) invariably arouses a number of observers' especially relatives and friends' emotions of pity towards them – Pele and Assibit. The lawyers being in their capacities as defenders and friends thought it wise to appeal for a pardon. The way the lawyers put it that "these men have families and relatives that depend on them and have worked for the nation. Jailing them will only put the lives of their dependents in danger" (Abuga Pele, Assibit jailed 18 years – https://www.myjoyonline.com. Wednesday, February 28, 2018) brings out the assumption

that they expect the presiding judge, Justice Afia Serwaah Asare Botwe, to put herself in the shoes of the two convicts just as they the lawyers had and now feel pity.

One of the factors that may bring about fallacies is, the worldview of the arguer. It can be formed based on personal observations, background information, and prejudices. These views bring about a network of beliefs, attitudes, habits, memories and values that a person uses in explaining situations. Beliefs which are formed based on personal observations raise fallacies such as appeal to popularity, hasty generalization, and so on since conclusions of these fallacies dwell mainly on what a person observes. Unexamined background information makes people form certain habits unconsciously which can be used to rationalize issues that are in the first place not rational (Hurley 2006:144). This leads to fallacies like straw man, slippery slope, weak analogy and irrelevant or unqualified authority. It could also be pointed out that the issue raised by the lawyers about the state of Ghana's prison and the status of their clients is an attempt to change or distort the issue under discussion or deviate from same. This is an attempt to present deceptive alternatives (or false dilemma) in relation to imprisonment that, one, chiefs are not sent into prisons, and two, it is only people with no status in the community that are or should be imprisoned.

An instance of slippery slope is seen in the arguments raised by the Ghana Education Service and the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools as an input on the debate on the issue of whether mobile phones should be used in basic and second-cycle schools in the country, Ghana (Debate over use of mobile phones in Second Cycle Institutions – https://www.ghanaweb.com. December 10, 2017). In a way to address

the issue, these two bodies vehemently opposed this move to allow students in SHSs (Senior High Schools) to use mobile phones. This is because it might lead to illegal connections of electricity, by students, to charge their phones especially in their dormitories. They noted that allowing the use of mobile phones in SHSs would have dire consequences on students as a result of their (mobile phones) distraction and abuse (Debate over use of mobile phones in Second Cycle Institutions – https://www.ghanaweb.com. December 10, 2017). The mistake in their reasoning stems from the unwarranted relation established between the use of mobile phones and the dire consequence on the students as a necessary one. Their assumption is that there would necessarily be dire consequences on the concentration of the students once they are allowed to use mobile phones. This assumption may seem logical to them because of their background information or their personal observations, but this is not always the case or may not always be the case.

These points identified as factors that lead to fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses serve as the basis for which this thesis could be said to be significant.

To be able to detect fallacies in socio-political discourses, the listener or reader must fully understand the various fallacies that can occur in same (socio-political discourses). Hurley (2003) states that, a fallacy is a defect in an argument that consists in something more than merely false premises. They usually involve a mistake in reasoning or the creation of some illusion that makes a bad argument appear good. As stated earlier in this work, fallacies are in two forms, formal and informal. Formal fallacies have identifiable forms and can only occur in deductive arguments. Because formal fallacies have identifiable forms, and structures, they are easy to detect. The mere

knowledge of the form and structure of (the) formal fallacies are enough for an individual to detect them in any discourse. The following is an example of a formal fallacy in categorical syllogisms. This fallacy takes the form below:

All A are B

All C are B

Therefore, all A are C

According to Hurley (2003), the invalidity of this form of argument can be seen by merely examining its form. The problem, Hurley (2003) asserts, is from the second premise, from the positions of 'C' and 'B'. If their positions are changed whereby, they replace each other, then the argument becomes valid. Thus, one must have knowledge of the forms (or structures) of arguments (formal arguments) in order for one to be able to detect possible fallacies therein.

Informal fallacies however are more difficult to detect than formal fallacies. Informal fallacies do not have definite forms or structures. Therefore, arguments and expressions involving such fallacies must be analyzed and understood before one can detect the fallacy (fallacies) involved, if any. It is difficult to uncover informal fallacies in discourses because of the variety of the ways in which these fallacies can occur. Hurley (2003) believes that, informal fallacies accomplish their purpose in so many different ways that no single umbrella theory covers them all. This goes to show that, unlike formal fallacies that only occur by the misplacing of terms in the form or structure, informal fallacies can occur in so many different modes.

Detecting informal fallacies can be a challenge because they (fallacies) are not always distinct. When fallacies occur in ordinary usage, however, they are often neither clear-cut nor easily recognizable. The reason is that, there are innumerable ways of making mistakes in arguments and variations inevitably occur that may not be exact instances of any specifically named fallacy.

In addition, one fallacious way of arguing may be mixed together with one or more others and the strands of reasoning may have to be disentangled before the fallacies can be named. Yet, another problem arises from the fact that arguments in ordinary language are rarely presented in complete form. It often happens that a premise or conclusion is left unexpressed which may obscure the nature of the evidence that is presented or the strength of the link between premises and conclusion. Alertness is the key to detecting fallacies in ordinary language. Thus, the one listening to or reading socio-political discourses must pay close attention to the claims of the arguer. The following questions must be answered: what is the conclusion? What are the reasons given in support of the conclusion? Are the reasons relevant to the conclusion? Do the reasons support the conclusion? Is there an argument at all? Is the speaker just expressing personal (subjective) feelings?; among others. Having explained these general principles regarding how to detect fallacies as they appear in socio-political discourses in particular and arguments in general, let us turn our attention to dealing with specific ubiquitous cases of detecting fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses.

Ad hominem

This fallacy mostly occurs between two arguers. The first person usually advances an argument and the second person instead of directing his argument against

that of the first person, directs the argument to the first person himself or herself attacking the person (personality) of the arguer. The fallacy occurs when the person making the argument is attacked or abused to discredit his/her argument. Here, the audience, listener, reader, etc. has to look out for any type of attack from the arguer's opponent. The attack could be outright abuse; it could be based on some circumstance(s) of the arguer or it could be based on the fact that the arguer has done the same thing, a similar thing or a worse thing than what he or she may be arguing about.

Slippery slope

With this fallacy, the reader has to look out for arguments that propose that one event will follow from another, without providing any logical reason that guarantees the claim. Arguments of this nature make it a necessity for one event to follow another while it is not so or may not always be the case. Slippery slope fallacies can be inductive fallacies and so they fall prey to the error that the future will not always resemble (be the same as) and or follow the past. Hence, the reason why one cannot accept without cogent qualification, slippery slope discourses, arguments and or expressions.

Straw man

To detect this fallacy, the audience, listener, reader, etc. must be on the look-out for arguments that are exaggerated and bizarrely presented; in order to discredit the argument of the other arguer.

False dilemma

Here, the reader has to be on the look-out for arguments that present two likely or unlikely alternatives as if they were the only ones available. For example, when a

politician tells (the) electorates to either choose him or her; or choose a different person (any of his or her opponents) and risk (the electorates) being in perpetual bondage.

Ad populum

This is also known as the appeal to the masses fallacy. This fallacy occurs when there is the claim that because something is popular or accepted by the majority, then it is true or good. Popularity does not validate an argument; and this, the audience, listener and reader must know.

Appeal to irrelevant or unqualified authority

This fallacy occurs in arguments when the authorities cited to validate a certain claim are not credible. The credibility of these authorities may be questionable in terms of expertise, bias and prejudice, among others. To detect this fallacy, thus, the audience, listener and reader must assess the source (the authority) making the argument.

Hasty generalization

This fallacy occurs when conclusion is drawn about all members of a group from evidence that concerns a selected sample, where this sample evidence may not be representative of the group. It might be the sample in question is either too small or not randomly selected. Here, the reader has to look-out for arguments that draw conclusions from premises (samples) which do not offer adequate support for the (general) conclusion drawn.

Appeal to force

This fallacy occurs whenever an arguer passes a conclusion to another person and tells that person either implicitly or explicitly that some harm will come to him or her if he or she does not accept the conclusion. It always involves a threat by or from the arguer to the physical or psychological wellbeing of the listener or reader who may be either a single person or a group of people.

Appeal to pity

This fallacy occurs when an arguer attempts to support a conclusion by merely evoking pity from the reader or listener. This pity may be directed towards the arguer of certain third party. Mostly, the appeal will have nothing to do with the argument; but an emotional plan by the arguer. The reader or listener must look at the basis of the appeal, and then, draw the inference (by way of detecting) of the fallacy inherent in the argument.

These are some of the fallacies that may occur in socio-political discourses. If one is totally abreast with how these fallacies are committed, then one is adequately equipped to detect these fallacies in socio-political discourses and any other discourse(s) in which they occur. Alertness and a good understanding or knowledge of these fallacies are needed because some of these fallacies are quite tricky and difficult to detect.

5.4.2 Strategies to avoid committing fallacies

On the one hand, being able to detect fallacies is important for a reader and or a listener and on the other hand, being able to avoid the act of committing fallacies is also important for an arguer who wants to make coherent and valid arguments.

To be able to avoid fallacies, we have to be able to determine why people commit fallacies. According to Hurley (2003:111), the question, 'why do people commit fallacies?' has no simple or straight forward answer. He, however, identified three factors that lead to most of the informal mistakes in reasoning.

The first factor is intent (as with fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses) (Hurley 2003:112). This is to say that, people intentionally or knowingly commit fallacies so as to acquire some benefits for themselves or some other person(s) – as with the socio-political fallacies, examples of which have been cited in this thesis. To avoid committing fallacies intentionally, there must be some form of moral education where a speaker/arguer must understand that using intentionally dishonest means to acquire something he or she does not merit is cheating, which is naturally, morally wrong.

The second factor according to Hurley (2003:112), is a careless mental posture combined with an emotional disposition favoring or opposing some person or thing. Here, the careless mental posture opens the door to fallacious reasoning, and the emotional disposition pushes the arguer through it. The political atmosphere in Ghana today is an example of this situation – supporters of political parties accept 'anything' from their parties; whether good or bad. To avoid fallacies committed as a result of mental carelessness and emotional disposition, one must develop a thorough familiarity with the informal fallacies combined with a habitual realization of how emotions affect people's reasoning. Hurley (2003:112) believes that, unchecked emotions are an open invitation to illogical reasoning and can lead a person to commit any fallacy blindly. One can say here that, the sleep of reason begets monsters.

The third factor concerns the world-view of the arguer. The 'world-view' of the arguer must also be checked in trying to avoid fallacies. Hurley (2003:13) describes world-view as a cognitive network of beliefs, attitudes, habits, memories, values and other elements that condition and render the world in which we live meaningful. An arguer's world-view can lead to the commission of informal fallacies because, they involve unexamined presuppositions. To avoid fallacies that arise from the influence of world views, the arguer must acknowledge and critique his or her presuppositions. One must be sure to question one's own beliefs and mindset to be able to present arguments devoid of fallacies.

At this point, let us pay attention to some suggested ways one can avoid committing fallacies in socio-political discourses. The following points will be considered (Copi & Cohen 1998:56):

- Look out for good premises – premises that warrant the acceptance of their conclusion

- make sure premises provide good support for the conclusion but not some other conclusion, or no conclusion at all

- Be able to distinguish between rhetoric and logic

- Be able to identify bad proofs

- Be able to identify wrong number of choices

- Be able to identify a disconnect between proof and conclusion, etc.

- Endeavour to check that the speaker has addressed the most important or relevant aspects of the issue he/she intended to (that is, his/her premises and conclusion focus on what is really important to the issue), and

- Check to ensure the speaker does not make claims that are so strong or sweeping that he/she can't really support them with cogent evidence(s). First, fallacies that are built based on emotions, can simply be avoided by identifying the irrelevance of the emotions one finds oneself in to the argument being raised. It is particularly easy to slip up and commit a fallacy when one has strong feelings about one's position, assertion, hypothesis, etc. For instance, if one commits the fallacy of appeal to emotions, you should kindly point out that the way one feels about a statement or an idea is not what makes it true or false. The very fact that we are outraged by something doesn't mean that we can discount it. If necessary, you can also point out how being angry at something is likely to make people less prone to logical reasoning and less likely to notice the shortcomings of certain arguments or the strengths of others; however, be careful, because this observation has the potential to make people even more emotional. An argument in this regard may fail to convey any logically relevant idea about an issue on which the arguer is very attached to emotionally. This situation sparks a number of emotionally related fallacies including but not limited to appeal to force, appeal to pity and appeal to emotions.

A typical instance of an appeal to ignorance, an emotionally related fallacy, can be seen in an appeal court case between Nana S. K. Gray Adobor, the appellant, who believed to be posing as a Barrister at Law, and representing various people in Tema, a

city in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and the Republic, Ghana, the respondent (https://www.ghanalegalinformationinstitution.com. December 15, 2007). After he was arrested and arraigned before court, he pleaded guilty with explanation. His explanation was that, "he studied law in Toronto University Law School in Canada and graduated with L. L. B in the year 2000. In 2005, he returned to Ghana and at the time of his arrest, 2007, he was serving as a National service personnel in the Ministry of Health. That having studied in Canada, a commonwealth country, he assumed that he could practice law in Ghana, another commonwealth country; and he was not aware of the post call studies in Ghana" (https://www.ghanalegalinformationinstitution.com. December 15, 2007). Obviously here, one could see the fallacy – ignorance of the law does not exonerate one from being charged for committing a crime.

Another court case I accessed and assessed on *ghanaweb* about Bishop Kanco gives an instance of appeal to popularity (https://www.ghanalegalinformationinstitution.com. December 15, 2007). Bishop Kanco was arrested on the grounds of defrauding a British national, Ms. Clova Sutherland, of Ghc 312,000 (Three Hundred and Twelve Thousand Ghana Cedis). He was alleged to have made the complainant believe that she would die if she did not allow him to pray over the cheque for the said amount of money. In the course of the prosecution, Kanco claimed that the money was a gift from Sutherland. The court presided over by Mr. D. E. K. Daketse ordered the Bishop to refund the money to the complainant after Kanco's lawyer, Mr. K. Adjabeng begged the court to defer sentence so that his client can sort himself out so as to return the money.

The request of Mr. Adobor in the first instance and the Lawyer in the second instance are more of emotional appeals rather than presentation of what we have out there as facts. The lawyer is expectant of a consideration that inures to the benefit of his client, on moral grounds. It is more of an attempt to get people to accept your idea by making them feel sorry for you or someone else. To avoid this error, there is the need to do away with appeal to the situation of arousing emotions in people to promote agenda that inure to our benefits or you need to avoid trying to get your audience to agree with you by making them feel sorry for yourself or someone else.

Again, fallacies, can be avoided by identifying deceptive number of choices in an argument. False dilemma is one of the fallacies that may fall within this category. For instance, in the following reasoning: 'Either we don't defeat aging and stave off cultural stagnation, or we do defeat aging and put up with cultural stagnation;' it is a false dilemma that these are the only options and that there will be no middle ground where aging is defeated by cultural stagnation — assuming that it would even be a consequence — is either prevented or mitigated. For example, assuming that the presence of very long-lived individuals necessarily leads to stagnation (which is uncertain at this stage and might well not happen if the brain's plasticity is sufficiently preserved by comprehensive rejuvenation), there is still the option of mitigating this problem through social programs that provide continuous learning. To deal with this or avoid it, one should simply provide examples of options between the two extremes having identified the wrong number of choices in the wrong argument. The Institute of Economic Affairs' (IEA's) debates organized in Ghana, for instance, are meant to present opportunity to presidential candidates of political parties that have representations in Ghana's Parliament House to

interact with the citizenry. The 2016 presidential debate (https://www.ghanalegalinformationinstitution.com. July 12, 2016) however was met with a number of challenges. It was clear, according to reports, that the then President, John Mahama and his party, the NDC, had the issue of "Dumsor" (persistent power, electricity outages) as an albatross on them (The President and his political party). So, they (the president and his party) decided not to participate in the IEA presidential debate (https://www.ghanalegalinformationinstitution.com. Tuesday, July 12, 2016).

This decision by president Mahama and his party not to participate in the IEA debate necessitated a number of opinions from the Ghanaian community. We had claims from Kwaku Baako, a social commentator and a veteran media practitioner, describing this (the decision by president Mahama and his party, the NDC not to participate in the IEA debate) as "bad judgment" (Mahama and his NDC not to participate in IEA Presidential debate – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, July 12, 2016). Dr. Ransford Gyampo, a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon, referred to the same decision by president Mahama and his party as "political suicide" (Mahama and his NDC not to participate in IEA Presidential debate – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Tuesday, July 12, 2016).

The description of the actions of President Mahama and his political party not to participate in the IEA debate by Dr. Gyampo as a political suicide renders his (Gyampo's) reasoning as presenting a false dilemma. Dr. Gyampo might have opined in that direction because he thought the decline of the party to engage in the debate would make them lose their position as the majority in power and the presidential seat. To some extent, this could be said to be the case but reasoning in line with IEA's policy that a winner of

presidential debate does not automatically become the president of Ghana, I would consider Dr. Gyampo's statement as presenting his audience with only two alternatives (deceptive ones of cause). The first alternative is that presidential candidates who make it for the IEA presidential debate have greater chances of winning the election subsequently. The second alternative is that presidential candidates who have declined the invitation to debate may not have the chance to be elected into power; that is, they are committing political suicide. These two alternatives are actually limited alternatives hence a false dilemma. If this were not the case, Nana Akuffo Addo, the current president of the Republic of Ghana and the NPP side should have been at the losing side of the 2016 general elections in Ghana. This is because the latter part of the period for preparations to the election saw Mahama and his party rescinding their decision not to participate while Nana Addo and his party now had decided not to participate. The error in Dr. Gyampo's reasoning is that if the earlier actions of Mahama characterized a political suicide for him and his party, then that should have worked against Nana Addo since he also took the same decision that necessitated that comment in the first place. To avoid the occurrence of these forms of fallacies in our speeches, we have to identify the alternatives available in a situation when discussing such issues but not limit the discussion on the issue to just two options while there are or could be a lot more of these options.

Also, another means of avoiding fallacies is to identify the disconnection between proof(s), inference(s), premise(s), etc. and conclusion. For instance, in the passage below, an arguer uses a hasty generalization fallacy which clearly shows a disconnect between proof(s) and conclusion. Someone claims that rejuvenation would lead to cultural

stagnation; because all the old people she personally knows are a bunch of stubborn, reactionary fossils who dream all day long of the good, old days when phones didn't exist yet. Clearly, she needs better friends, but do the old people she knows represent the population enough for her to conclude that all, or at least most, old people turn out to be like that? Does it depend only on age, or does the cultural context people grow in, and the education they receive, matter at all? Will rejuvenation biotechnologies allow older people to retain youthful brain plasticity? These questions need answers before we can generalize the observation to the average behaviour of older people in a world with rejuvenation. To avoid this fallacy, one must always have sample size in mind. The sample size would then help to create the logical link between the proof (in this case, the premise or premises) and the conclusion.

If one is able to identify the disconnection between proof and conclusion, one is likely to avoid a fallacy like slippery slope. In the instance of the ban on the use of mobile phones in Senior High Schools in Ghana (Debate on ban on use of mobile phones in Senior High Schools – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Sunday, August 6, 2017), the Ghana Education Service has established grounds for rejecting the use of mobile phones on a proof that is logically disconnected from the claim the service seeks to establish. This shows that there is really not enough evidence for the assumption. The Ghana Education Service only assumes that allowing secondary school students to use phones is a step onto a slippery slope that will end up sliding all the way to the bottom, that is, lack of concentration – concentrating on their academics. Until the service is able to create a logical link between these two, their argument would remain fallacious. Hence, errors

(fallacies) in such arguments can be avoided by simply acknowledging the logical connection between the conclusion being established and the proof for that conclusion.

Furthermore, one can avoid fallacies in socio-political discourses by identifying elements of bad proof(s). When you examine all fallacies in logic, it could be seen that they arise mainly as a result of bad proofs – errors in reasoning. It follows that to be able to identify them (fallacies) and avoid using such proofs, one's argument must be devoid of logical errors. People at times appeal to what the masses would say as a means of justifying claims. This situation gives rise to *ad populum* – appeal to the people/masses. The response of a principal state attorney, Mr. Rexford Wiredu, to the verdict of the court case concerning Bishop Kanco (Rexford Wiredu on Bishop Kanco's prosecution – https://www.ghanaweb.com. Monday, November 11, 2018) is to some extent flawed since he, the state attorney, appealed to the masses. Mr. Rexford Wiredu told journalists that the state would appeal against the judgement. This is because the court, in his opinion, did not give the Bishop the time-frame that serves him right for committing a second-degree felony. This could send a wrong signal to cases involving men of God. According to Mr. Wiredu, if the court differs its judgment from what the man merits, Ghana's image is likely to go further down the drain as a nation that supports such practices of so-called men of God. Such way or mode of reasoning and other related modes can be avoided by making sure that one is recommending that one's listeners and readers accept one's position because everyone else believes it to be the case or otherwise one's position is logically cogent? This is because, the opinion popularly held by the masses is not always right.

As one can see from the discussions above, there are many ways in which arguments can fall apart due to faulty or illogical connections between the supposed conclusion and its premise(s). When trying to induce inferences from data, for instance, it is important not to draw conclusions too quickly or too hastily; otherwise, you may end up with errors of hasty or sweeping generalizations that will weaken your overall claim. Similarly, it is important not to construct an either-or argument when dealing with a complex, multi-faceted issue or to assume a causal relationship when dealing with socio-political issues that are based on subjective, emotivist position. Other ensuing errors – false dilemma and *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, respectively – may weaken the import of socio-political discourses as well. In brief, here, one should be able to distinguish between rhetoric and logic to be able to avoid committing fallacies.

In a related explication, political discourse analysis is a field of discourse analysis which focuses on discourse in the political sphere. The vast bulk of studies in political discourse, as discussed in Chapter three of this work, is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers, and other members of government, parliament or political parties, at the local, national and international levels. Graber (1981:14) writes that political discourse should be focused on politicians, political institutions, governments, political media and political supporters operating in political environments to achieve political goals.

Social discourse is everything that is said or written in a given state of society, everything that is printed and talked about and represented through (the) electronic media. This means that social discourse is mainly discourse in the social setting (which is vast) and so this work discussed largely examples from religious discourses and the

main social discourse in this work. In these two types of discourses, (political and social) there are a lot of arguments made. If these arguments are studied and or analyzed, there are lots of defective thinking and arguments which could be uncovered as projected in this work all this while. These erroneous thinking patterns in socio-political discourses are termed socio-political fallacies. They occur in so many different types of discourses but they are perennial or recurrent in socio-political discourses.

Fallacies here are misconceptions that occur as a result of incorrect reasoning. Fallacies are evident in almost every discourse, and this is no different from socio-political discourse. Once again, this part of the thesis has demonstrated how to detect and avoid fallacies in socio-political discourses. Some fallacies are easy to detect but some are difficult and subtle to detect and occur in discourses without been noticed. Before a person can detect fallacies, the person must be acquainted with the various fallacies that there are. Fallacies as we know and or have read in this thesis are in two main categories – formal and informal fallacies. Formal fallacies are those that occur in deductive arguments and can be identified by examining the structure and or the form of arguments while informal fallacies are mostly content based fallacies which can be detected by studying or examining the content of the argument. Fallacies that are prone to occur in discourses are informal fallacies. This calls for a critical content analysis, which will help uncover these hidden fallacies.

We have looked above, at some general ways of avoiding fallacies, now let us look at some of the fallacies mentioned earlier in this essay and specific ways to avoid them in socio-political discourses.

Hasty generalization

One of the fallacies discussed in this work is hasty generalization. How would one avoid this fallacy? When arguing, one must focus on all (or at least the greater percentage) available data and not just on anecdotal evidence, before making conclusions. In socio-political discourses, one must avoid using sample sizes that are not representative enough to draw one's conclusion(s). In political discourse for instance, opinion pulls (predicting elections results) may fall prey to this fallacy if such pulls are not representative enough. It is not surprising that most opinion pulls in Ghana on elections, have been wrong after actual results of elections are (have been) announced.

Appeal to the people (*ad populum*)

One should try to practice critical self-reflection. Here, one should question one's self about opinions that are accepted by the majority. One should not subscribe to things just because they are popular. This is because popularity does not authenticate or validate the goodness/rightness or badness/wrongness of something. Why should I join the majority party? Why is this social norm preferred to the other(s); is it because the majority say so? These and other questions should inform one to be able to avoid this fallacy – appeal to the people (masses).

Personal attack

To avoid this fallacy, one must not concentrate on the traits, circumstances, etc. of the arguer but rather on the content of the argument. One must abandon the arguer and try to determine if there is any value in the content of the argument.

Slippery slope

Here, an arguer must be able to provide logical reasons why he or she believes an event will follow from another. Most people make this claim based on imagination which does not give proper account of probabilities.

Straw man

To avoid committing this fallacy, one must not be biased towards the opponent. One must state the opponent's argument as strongly, accurately and clear-cut as possible. One must not state inaccurate and weak arguments so as to discredit the arguments of their opponents.

False dilemma

One must be sure that, when presenting arguments where there is the claim that there are only two options to choose from that there is no other alternative. If there are other alternatives, then one must do well to acknowledge all these alternatives; and, perhaps, state why the two alternatives proposed (or being proposed) are the ones to accept (or reject), and not the other possible alternatives.

Appeal to unqualified authority

To avoid this fallacy, one must make sure that when citing an authority to back an argument, the said authority must be an expert in the subject under discussion. That is to say, the authority must have some qualified amount of knowledge about what is being discussed.

Appeal to pity

When making an argument, one must make sure not to try to get approval from one's audience by evoking the emotion of pity in them or for a third party.

It is important to be able to detect and avoid fallacies in socio-political discourses. This particular discourse is very important in our daily lives. Being able to avoid fallacies will help one avoid defective campaign speeches, arguments in the social and political spheres and being able to avoid will help one to present impeccable arguments which cannot be easily discredited or played down upon or may not be able to pass the test of logical reasoning/logical assessment. Defective reasoning is bad and must be absolutely avoided in any socio-political discourse.

5.5   Conclusion

All in all, this chapter has afforded the reader an appreciation of possible implications – positive and negative – of fallacies in socio-political discourses. The chapter has explained that political and social commentators may use fallacies deliberately for emotional and sympathetic purposes. This is positive to the users. Even so, it (the use of fallacies) may be negative to the audience, listener, and the reader as they (the audience) will/may be deceived by these appeals. We have discussed in this chapter some negative implications of fallacies which include, but not limited to the following; that fallacies in socio-political discourses deceive the audience; that they (fallacies) cloud the truth; that they make arguments (discourses) bad; and that they break the rules of logical reasoning among others. The final part of the chapter provided some

ways one can detect and avoid committing fallacies in socio-political discourses. Alertness, knowing the rules of logical reasoning, among others, are some ways one can detect and avoid these fallacies.

Chapter Six

General Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1   General conclusion

Imagine seeing a friend, Fish (as he's called) on a sunny afternoon mowing his lawn. You exchange greetings and pleasantries with him and you realize that he is barefooted. You are surprised! So, you ask him:

You – Fish, what's wrong with you? Are you ok? Is everything well? Are you ok up there? Why are you mowing in bare feet in this sunny period?

Fish – Oh that! According to recent statistics, he said, the overwhelming majority of lawn-mowing accidents involve people wearing shoes while mowing. Very few accidents, he continued, involve people going barefoot.

According to Fish therefore, one's chances of having an accident are statistically much greater if one wears shoes while mowing.

Fish is entitled to his opinion and or position. Everyone is entitled to their opinion(s). Even so, that doesn't mean opinions are all, equally, reasonable; at least, even if based on common sense. Fish's opinion, for example – and without any shred of disrespect to him – will need a little fine-tuning: As it may commit the false cause fallacy. We humans are clever enough (or so we are told) to send spacecraft beyond the solar system, combine genetic material so as to change the varieties of life, and build machines that outplay grand masters at chess. Yet, we frequently make mistakes (sometimes unpardonably) in our everyday thinking, like Fish. Notwithstanding the impressive

accomplishments of the human intellect, we often frequently come face to face with examples of faulty reasoning, error, and misjudgment (Moore and Parker 2001:1).

This study has shown that in Ghana today, socio-political discourses are mostly, if not always, laced with fallacies. Examples abound each day as this work has shown – from the church auditorium to the political campaign stage. I have demonstrated that clear thinking requires an effort and doesn't always come naturally. However, one can get better at it if one is willing to work a bit and accept guidance based on the rules of logic and critical thinking. Good reasoning doesn't happen in a vacuum. When we hear someone express an opinion, we usually already have (or may have) information on the topic and can generally figure out where to find more (if more is needed). Having both the desire and the ability to bring such information to bear on decisions is part of the critical evaluation process that should be done in assessing socio-political discourses. Some of the key skills this work has recommended for audiences, readers and listeners of socio-political discourses are the abilities to listen and read carefully (be very alert) and to stay informed. The study has emphasized that one should know the rules of the game. One should know the principles that govern good reasoning in arriving at cogent decision makings.

This work has discussed some common fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses in Ghana. The meaning of discourse as used in this work is any verbal exchange or conversation. It is any form of expression in words, either speech or writing – a formal lengthy exposition of some subject, either spoken or written; as in the example of the Preacher, on Sunday, who gives us a long discourse on *obedience*. Based on this

meaning of discourse, this work has shown how socio-political activists and religious leaders use fallacies, either calculatedly or inadvertently, to interact with their audience. The work has shown how fallacies have been used and continue to be used in socio-political and religious discourses in Ghana. The examples that have been discussed in this work on social discourse have been drawn mostly from religious discourses, commentaries from policy analysts and the media. Those (examples) that have been used here on political discourses have been drawn from political campaigns, speeches and interactions.

The study has shown that to reason logically and be able to detect and avoid fallacies in socio-political discourses, one could adopt and adapt the following:

1. When one is taking a position (or making an opinion) on an issue, the person's position on the issue must be critically examined.

2. One must assess what considerations are relevant to that issue.

3. One must check whether the reasoning underlying the person's claims is logically good (valid) reasoning.

4. One must check whether, all other things being equal, we should accept, reject or even suspend judgement on what the person claimed or is claiming.

5. One must be very levelheaded, open-minded and objective and not allow oneself to be influenced by extraneous factors, or to profess faith without reasoning, or even to be a political fanatic, engaging in voluntarism (allowing your desires to determine your opinions and positions instead of rationalism).

Language, which is the fundamental means by which to engage in socio-political discourse, can be viewed as a complicated tool having many uses. In every socio-political discourse, questions are asked, commands issued, appeals are made, prayers are raised, emotions expressed, definitions proposed, apologies are made, and rules and principles set forth. The language used in socio-political discourses can be used poorly. Assertions and appeals can be confused with factual/logical inaccuracies. Statements can be formulated in ways that make their content dangerously vague, ambiguous or generally misleading. Consider the following statement which is intended to illustrate my point: 'Richard's father is sick, so he is worried.' Here, one is unable to tell who is worried. In other words, who does 'he is worried' refer to? Richard or the father? A lack of perspective can generate problems in grasping how a claim, a discourse is being used in a particular, given, situation. Problems of this sort have been discussed in this work, providing ways of understanding fallacies that appear in socio-political discourses, how to detect and avoid them.

Moreover, another reason this research is appropriate is the fact that it combines a study of socio-political discourses and informal fallacies to create awareness in socio-political commentators and their audience, listeners and readers.

I have shown that fallacies are phenomena that always occur in discourses. It has been affirmed in this thesis that fallacies are erroneous forms of reasoning that can obstruct the validity of an argument. Strictly speaking, a fallacy is a mistake in reasoning. One commits a fallacy when the reasons advanced or accepted in support of a claim fail to justify its (the claim's) acceptance. A fallacy can be committed either when one is

deciding whether to accept a claim on the basis of a fallacious argument with which one has been presented, or when one is presenting the fallacious argument oneself. A fallacious argument or inference is one in which there is an inappropriate connection between premises and conclusion. I have shown that fallacies can be committed intentionally or unintentionally, regardless, anytime they occur they mislead people to accept faulty reasoning or arguments as correct or good reasoning. It is then necessary to study and know fallacies in socio-political discourses so as to be equipped with the necessary tools to be able to detect and avoid same. Fallacies occur in many areas of discourse but one of the most important areas in which it occurs is socio-political discourse. This area of discourse is a very important area of discourse since it contains so many different issues which are very relevant to the development of society. This is why it is very important to study fallacies in this area of discourse and determine how people use fallacies to influence social and political issues and decisions.

This work has been essentially about fallacies in Ghana's socio-political environment. The work started with talks about the nation Ghana before moving to discuss the socio-political environment of Ghana today or contemporary Ghana. Here, details of the socio-political environment of Ghana were discussed.

Next are fallacies, which are discussed in two categories, where a reference was made about formal fallacies and informal fallacies. Fallacies are defined as errors in reasoning. Formal fallacies occur in relation with the structure of an argument whilst informal fallacies are related to the content of the argument. This is to say that formal fallacies are concerned with the form or arrangement of (the) propositions in an argument while informal fallacies deal with the meaning of the propositions in the argument. The

informal fallacies were further divided into groups, where we had fallacies of relevance and fallacies of weak induction, fallacies of weak analogy among others. The work moved on to a detailed discussion of fallacies. In all, twenty-three fallacies were discussed with very useful examples and illustrations: Seven of these fallacies were classified under fallacies of relevance; five under fallacies of weak induction; one fallacy of weak analogy; eight under fallacies of presumption and two under fallacies of ambiguity.

In socio-political discourse, there are political issues and varieties of issues in the social environment. Political discourse is one of the areas of discourse where the occurrence of these fallacies is very evident. Owing to this, the thesis identified, and discussed some of the common informal fallacies that occur in this discourse. These informal fallacies may be intentional or unintentional but in political discourse, it is mostly, if not always, intentional so as to achieve political gains and agenda.

Another area of discourse that was tackled in this work where fallacies frequently occur is the religious sector. Matters of religion are mostly matters that are delicate to handle; as these matters are mostly, again if not always, based on faith. Many a time, religious personalities use fallacious means to drive their religious agenda across. This work has identified the informal fallacies that are common in religious discourses in Ghana today. It considered religious leaders, social commentators, opinion leaders and policy makers or policy analysts.

The thesis (research) then looked at what these fallacies imply in relation to socio-political discourses. The implications were discussed in two-folds – positive and negative. The thesis looked at the positive implications of fallacies before it progressed to the negative implications of same. How will a fallacy be beneficial to a person and how

will it be to the disadvantage of the same person or another person? If fallacies often occur in socio-political discourses, then one must have the ability to detect these fallacies and avoid them. The work discussed how to detect fallacies and how to avoid them. This will help readers and listeners to be able to know when they are being misled with faulty arguments (discourses). If one has the ability to detect fallacies then one will have the power to analyze discourses and be able to fish out faulty reasoning or bad arguments which occur, be it intentional or unintentional. If one has knowledge about fallacies then one will be able to avoid them, that is, one would avoid making arguments that contain errors in reasoning. This will help one to be able to construct valid and strong arguments which are devoid of errors.

This work equips the reader with concepts and techniques used in the identification, analysis and assessment of socio-political discourses. The aim is to improve the readers' ability to tell whether an argument is being given, exactly what the argument is and whether you ought to be persuaded by it. I have done this for three reasons.

First, it is only by grasping those concepts that the audience, reader and listener can achieve a stable and explicit understanding of the purposes of presenting and analyzing socio-political discourses.

Second, familiarity with those concepts enables the audience to think and to talk about socio-political discourses in a systematically precise way; it provides a common currency in terms of which to generalize about these courses and to compare them.

Third, experience, including my teaching experience in the university, suggests that the concepts of logic and good reasoning themselves, when they explicitly appear in argumentative contexts, are amongst the most persistent sources of confusion.

Another reasoned way of viewing this study is to consider the idea of being critical with socio-political discourses. This involves exercising skilled judgment or observation. In this sense, this work offers the reader means of thinking clearly and intelligently about socio-political discourses. More precisely, this research, in general term, gives the reader a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate socio-political discourses and truth/false claims; to discover and overcome personal preconceptions and biases; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe, accept, reject and what to do. Put somewhat differently, this research has shown how to engage in disciplined thinking governed by clear intellectual standards.

More so, another conclusion, that could be drawn from this research is, it provides the reader with appropriate skills at understanding, analyzing, and evaluating arguments and viewpoints so as to be able to reason logically and draw appropriate conclusions from evidence and data; be intellectually honest with themselves, acknowledging what they don't know and recognizing their limitations, listen open-mindedly to opposing points of view and welcome criticisms of beliefs and assumptions.

This research can help people succeed in their careers as politicians, social commentators, policy analysts, media people, etc. – by improving their ability to solve problems, think creatively, and communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. It can also

reduce the likelihood of making serious mistakes in important personal decisions, promote democratic processes by improving the quality of public decision making, and liberate and empower individuals by freeing them from (the) unexamined assumptions, dogmas, and prejudices of their upbringing, their society, and their age.

Learning to think in critically analytical and evaluative ways means using mental processes such as attention, alertness, selection, and judgement. In particular, personal and emotional, or 'affective', reasons can create barriers. You are invited to consider, in this research, as far as fallacies in socio-political discourses are concerned, how far such barriers could be affecting your own thinking abilities and how you will manage these. Skills to be acquired in reading this research bring precision to the way one thinks and works with socio-political discourses.

Good thinking involves making accurate judgements. We have noted (or may have noted) in this research that our thinking might not be accurate if we are not fully aware of the influences that affect it. These can include such things as our own assumptions, preconceptions, bias, prejudices, likes, dislikes, omissions, commissions, beliefs, things we take for granted as normal and acceptable, and all those things about ourselves, others and our world that we have never questioned.

People who are outstanding at thinking logically (thinking carefully and factually in order to be able to distinguish facts from fancy) tend to be particularly self-aware. They reflect upon and evaluate their personal motivations, interests, prejudices, expertise and gaps in their knowledge. They question their own point of view and check the evidence used to support it. Becoming more self-aware takes courage. It can be unsettling to find

out things about ourselves we didn't know, as most of us like to think we know ourselves very well. It is also challenging to question our belief systems. We think of these as part of our identity and it can be unsettling if we feel our identity is called into question. Furthermore, the result of your thinking/reasoning might place you in a minority amongst your friends, family or colleagues. Nobody else might interpret the evidence in the same way as you. It takes courage to argue an alternative point of view, especially when it is possible that you might be wrong.

All in all, in our day to day activities, everyone – politicians, religious leaders, opinion leaders, media people, advertisers, etc. – is trying to convince us of something: You should go to bed early. You should buy this product and not the other. You should listen to my campaign message because I am the best candidate. You should drop out of college and go and learn a trade because there are no jobs today for college graduates. You should buy a Dodge Ram truck. You should study this research carefully .... And you spend a lot of time trying to decide what you should be doing, that is, trying to convince yourself: Should I take out a student loan? Is chocolate bad for my complexion? Should I really date someone who owns a car? Is this politician really telling me the truth? Will I be better off under the leadership of this politician? Is my religious leader leading me to my source of belief?

Are you tired of being conned? Of falling for every pitch? Of making bad decisions? Of fooling yourself or someone fooling/misleading you? Or just being confused? Reading and appreciating the rules of logical reasoning in socio-political discourses – identifying the fallacies inherent in same – as demonstrated in this research

(thesis) is a defense against a world of too much information and too many people trying to convince us. But it is more: Reasoning is what distinguishes us from beasts. Many of them can see better, can hear better, and are stronger. But they cannot plan, they cannot think through, they cannot discuss in the hopes of understanding better.

6.2   Recommendations

Reasoning involves analyzing evidence and drawing conclusions from it. The evidence may then be presented to support the conclusion. For example, we may consider that it is a cold day. Someone who disagrees may ask why we believe this. We may use evidence such as a thermometer reading and observation of weather conditions to justify our claim. Our reasons may be that the temperature is low and there is ice on the ground. We use basic examples of reasoning such as this every day. For professional and academic work, we are usually required to present such reasoning using formal structures such as essays, or reports with recommendations. This – reasoning in and for academic work – requires additional skills such as knowing how to: select and structure reasons to support a conclusion; present an argument in a consistent way; use logical order; use language effectively to present the line of reasoning. Inferring from this work so far, this research makes the following imperative recommendations. Socio-political commentators in Ghana in particular and the world at large on the one hand and their audiences, listeners, and readers on the other hand should bear the following in mind:

1. Listeners and readers of socio-political discourses should base their beliefs on facts and evidence rather than on personal preference or self-interest.

2. Socio-political commentators and their readers and listeners should be aware of the biases and preconceptions that shape the way people perceive the world.

3. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should think independently and must not be afraid to disagree with group opinion.

4. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should be able to get to the heart of an issue or a problem, without being distracted by personal dispositions.

5. Socio-political commentators and their readers and listeners should have the intellectual courage to face and assess fairly ideas that challenge even their own most basic beliefs.

6. Socio-political commentators and their readers and listeners should pursue truth and be curious about a wide range of issues.

7. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should have the intellectual perseverance to pursue insights or truths despite obstacles or difficulties.

8. Socio-political commentators should be able to identify other people's positions, beliefs, arguments and conclusions and assess the validity or otherwise of same.

9. Socio-political commentators should endeavour to evaluate other people's evidence(s) for alternative points of view.

10. Socio-political commentators and their readers and listeners should weigh up opposing arguments and evidence fairly.

11. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should be able to read between the lines, seeing behind surfaces, and identifying false or unfair assumptions.

12. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should be able to recognize techniques used to make certain positions more appealing than others.

13. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should know how to draw conclusions about whether arguments are valid and justifiable, based on good evidence and sensible assumptions.

14. Socio-political commentators should be able to present a point of view in a structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others.

15. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should engage in more focused reading and listening to socio-political discourses.

16. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should improve attention and observation.

17. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should improve ability to identify the key points in a text or other message(s) rather than becoming distracted by less important material(s).

18. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should improve ability to respond to the appropriate points in a message.

19. Socio-political commentators should have knowledge of how to get your own point across more easily.

20. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should try to acquire skills of analysis that you can choose to apply in a variety of situations and evidences.

21. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should possess attention to detail: Taking the time to note small clues that throw greater light on the overall issue.

22. Readers and listeners of socio-political discourses should possess skills in identifying trends and patterns: This may be through careful mapping of information, analysis of data, or identifying repetition and similarity.

23. Objectivity should be the watch word for socio-political commentators and their listeners and readers: Learn to put your own likes, beliefs and interests to one side with the aim of gaining the most accurate outcome or a deeper understanding in a given discourse.

This thesis has focused on socio-political discourses. This is not to say that fallacies occur only in socio-politics. Fallacies occur in various discourses. Future researchers can scrutinize other fields of discourses in relation to fallacies.

The fallacies discussed in this thesis are just the ones deemed to be popular in socio-political and religious discourses in Ghana. Future researchers should note that fallacies are numerous in number and that new ones may be uncovered. In future, one may decide to look at a different set of fallacies in socio-political discourses in Ghana or elsewhere.

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