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ARISTOTLE ON RHETORIC AND POLITICAL PERSUASIVE SKILLS: EXAMPLES FROM POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN AFRICAN POLITICS

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Abstract:

Aristotle's theory and principles of Rhetoric have an application to political communication. In this paper, we make a descriptive, critical and analytical exposition of the features of Rhetoric according to Aristotle with a focus on their application to political campaigns in Africa and elsewhere. While exposing the persuasive skills of Rhetoric we associate them with some logical fallacies which political speakers commit in their maneuvers to win credibility before the electorates. As Rhetoric is essentially an art of persuasion it is prone to some immoral stances. These may include deceiving and objectifying the audience for the political interests of the speakers, reciprocation of defamatory and hate speeches among political speakers, inciting of hatred and violence, etc. all aiming at persuading the electorate at all cost and by all means.

Keywords:

Rhetoric, Persuasion, Campaign, Audience, Electorate, Fallacy

Introduction

In the light of Aristotle, in this paper we investigate the skills a speaker has to use when speaking not only to be understood but also to persuade the audience. Conversely also, the same investigation is meant to help the audience to avoid falling prey of naïve and uncritical persuasion. Our focus is to see how Aristotle's theory of Rhetoric is applicable to political communication in general with particular examples from African politics. With examples from

Africa we aim at finding out why oftentimes seemingly unsellable political contestants succeed to sway the public opinion while the competent ones lose.

Theoretical Background

Human Nature and Rhetoric

In his Philosophical Anthropology Aristotle understands a human person as essentially having a faculty of communication and self-expression.[1] This faculty entails the human nature as rational and emotional. With this in view therefore, the human faculty for communication and self-expression may be analyzed from different angles. It may be understood as a faculty for communicating and for receiving communication; a faculty for grasping knowledge and for relaying knowledge to others; a faculty for persuading and for being persuaded. Epistemologically speaking, communication and self-expression aim at relaying some truth. Rhetorically speaking, they aim at persuading the audience. It is against this background that Rhetoric is closely related with communication.

Rhetoric and Communication

Aristotle defines Rhetoric as "*the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.*"[2] Persuasion as the end-in-view of Rhetoric presupposes the speaker as the persuading agent, the means of persuasion, and finally the audience as the recipient of persuasion. These are the features of Rhetoric which in the Aristotle's Communication Model are termed as *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* respectively.[3]

Ethos encompasses the communicator in his/her entirety. It is a concept with Greek etymological roots literary meaning 'character'.[4] In the context of Rhetoric and communication *ethos* as a feature of persuasion process summarizes the credibility of the communicator. This credibility is rooted on the character of the communicator, his/her personality qualities, his/her good history and experience, his/her morality level, his/her persuading achievements, his/her convincing and persuading authority and influence, his/her affiliation, his/her personal ability to touch the intellect and emotions of the audience. Classical scholars of Rhetoric analyzed *Ethos* as encompassing *phronesis, arête* and *eunoia*.[5] In the context of Rhetoric *phronesis* means a speaker's practical knowledge of how to pursue and achieve a moral end in a prudent manner, *arête* means the speaker's moral uprightness, *eunoia* means the speaker's goodwill towards the audience.[6]

Logos as well is Greek in etymology meaning 'a word', 'an external expression of an intellectual thought'. In the context of Rhetoric, *logos* refers to proper reasoning, correct, clear and logical expressing of one's ideas, appealing to a logically persuading presentation of communication, persuading by use of proofs, evidences and facts.[7]

[1] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals II*, 16, 660a1.

[2] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I*, 1355b25

[3] Colin Higgins and R. Walker, "Ethos, Logos, Pathos: Strategies of Persuasion in Social / Environmental Reports", *Accounting Forum* 36 (2012): 197 – 198.

[4] *Ibid*., 197.

[5] Susan Condor, Cristian Tileagă and Michael Billig, 'Political Rhetoric', *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 276.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Higgins and Walker, *Ethos, Logos, Pathos,* 198.

Pathos is a rhetorical feature which refers to the audience's emotional framework in relation to being persuaded. In Greek the word *pathos* literally means 'suffering' or 'experience'. It is a feature which appeals to the preparedness and emotional disposition of the audience's emotions to accommodate persuasion.[8] Through this feature the communicator makes use of the audience's level of feelings and sentiments, of sympathy and empathy to make it assume the feelings and emotions of the communicator – all aiming at persuading the audience. The three features of persuasion in Rhetoric lead us into the treatment of Rhetoric as intrinsically related to Ethics and to Dialectic as Aristotle maintained.[9] We approach this with some examples from Politics in the African context.

Rhetoric in Politics – Examples from Africa

Ethos in a Multicultural Setting

In their multicultural settings African societies vary in ethnicities, in tribes, in tribal languages and nomenclatures, in values, etc. These features contribute to the varied perceptions and conceptions of personalities, of moral frameworks, of life role modeling, of ideal leadership, etc. In this section, from the multicultural African perspective our study focuses on a philosophical analysis of how Aristotle's doctrine on *ethos* as a rhetoric mode plays a role in politics of either persuading or dissuading the electorate. Our discussion is inspired by the three major features of *ethos*, namely *phronesis* as practical wisdom of the speaker, *arête* as his/her moral excellence and *eunoia* as his/her goodwill to the audience.[10]

Ethos and Personalities of Politicians

For persuading the electorate the *ethos* of politicians matters. It encompasses knowledge of the subject matter which a politician speaks about in order to pull the electorate to his/her side. It also involves gender, age, etc. Through the *ethos* one reveals to people how much he/she is well acquainted with what he/she speaks about, and how wise and prudent he/she is in presenting himself/herself.[11] In the African context gender and age count a lot in expressing trustworthiness and credibility for being persuasive.

With the democratic majority-rule principle, women and the youth in Africa make the majority of the electorate. Still it is not easy for female and young political contestants to command persuasion and credibility in politics.[12] While advocating equal opportunity and individual merit, democracy in Africa still faces discriminatory challenges on lines of personalities based on age and gender.

In their research Stephen Okhonmina and Ikponmwosa Ebomoyi speak of the Nigerian context in which women in socio-political matters are subjugated under men.[13] In such a context it is arduous for women to persuade the electorate despite their individual merits. The same study reveals how women are marginally reflected in political governance in Nigeria in which out of

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[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I*, 1356a25-31.

[10] William W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle's Practical Side on His Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 283.

[11] As a rhetorical skill of exposing oneself through *ethos* some politicians in Africa and elsewhere use autobiographies in the form of books in order to sell their personalities to the electorate.

[12] Daniel Stockemer, "Women's Parliamentary Representation in Africa: The Impact of Democracy and Corruption on the Number of Female Deputies in National Parliaments", *Political Studies* 59 (2011): 699.

[13] Stephen Okhonmina and Ikponmwosa Ebomoyi, "Gender and Political Participation in Africa: The Nigeria Experience", in *Lafia Journal of Africa and Heritage Studies*, (2016): 44.

109 senators only 8 are women; out of 36 governors none is a woman; out of 35 speakers only one is a woman, etc.[14]

Basing on the *ethos* mode, women in many parts of Africa are perceived and trusted as mothers, wives, mistress, etc. and thus command persuasion on those capacities but not as leaders. This perception gives us a base to assert that the *ethos* mode of persuasion in most parts of Africa is favourable to men and discriminatory against women in matters of politics. With this in view therefore, while addressing the political audience one has to discern carefully features of his/her personality, use the persuading ones while evading the dissuading ones. While in the male-dominated societies being a male is an added persuading advantage, being a female dissuades the audience in such societies by branding such a female as inferior and incapable of assuming political roles.

As mentioned above, age is another dimension of *ethos* in the African context as expressive of credibility and trustworthiness of a personality. From the African cultural point of view like Aristotle, *phronesis* as practical wisdom comes with age and experience.[15] Advancement in age therefore carries seniority, superiority, experiential wisdom, moral authority, credibility and trustworthiness. A political speaker appealing to his/her advancement in age is likely to make a remarkable persuading impact of portraying credibility and to attract trust of the audience much more than a speaker who is junior in age. This shows that many African societies still embrace patriarchy and gerontocracy as a socio-political tenet.[16] This could be one of the factors which make the African youth to participate in politics both actively and passively at a relatively lower rate although they form a gigantic percentage both of the population and of the electorate.[17] Age therefore, may carry a rhetorical credit when an elder is communicating boosted by his/her age and experience while it may carry a rhetorical discredit when a young politician is communicating.

Ethos and Moral Standing of Politicians

Another important rhetorical dimension of *ethos* in African politics is *arête*, that is, the moral disposition and standing of the politician. The electorate trusts a person who stands and lives their moral values. One's personality commands credibility and trustworthiness if his/her morality framework reflects what the society either stands for or expects of him/her or both.[18]

Conversely, a politician loses credibility and thus fails to command persuasion if his/her personality is contrary, indifferent or alien to what the electorate holds as morally upright. Such socio-cultural situations make some parts of Africa prefer personality-based politics to issue-based politics.[19] While the latter focuses on objective issues such as principles, values, policies, ideologies, etc., the former is much more subjectively appealing to the personal good qualities

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[14] *Ibid*., 49. Such marginal female representation in politics is not a monopoly of Africa. A report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Map for Women in Politics of 2018 shows that women in that year made only 20.7% of female ministers world-wide. A study of Linda K. Kabwato *et al*. conducted in 2013 shows that in 2013 women were only 18% in parliamentary representation world-wide.

[15] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 1142a12-16.

[16] Ransford Edward Van Gyampo and Nana Akua Anyidoho, "Youth Politics in Africa", *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 8.

[17] *Ibid*. In their study while making reference to the Afrobarometer Round 6 Survey of 2014 – 2016 Ransford Edward Van Gyampo and Nana Akua Anyidoho show the youth to make 76% of Africa's population and 75% of Africa's electorate.

[18] William W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle's Practical Side on His Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric*, 283.

[19] Janelle Mangwanda and Beatriz Lacombe, "Issue-Based Politics vs Personality-Based Politics: A Tale of Two Nations", *Policy Brief 115,* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2015): 2.

or personal deficiencies of politicians in order to persuade or to dissuade the audience respectively.[20]

Ethos and the Background of Politicians

The background of a politician as a speaker is another rhetorical dimension of his/her *ethos*. In the context of African politics this includes the politician speaker's family, ethnicity, tribe, area of origin, educational and professional background, socio-economic caliber, party affiliation, religion, etc. A political speaker commands credibility or loses it and thus persuades or dissuades the electorate respectively by explicitly expressing features of his/her background such as his/her ethnicity, tribe and place of origin, party affiliation, caliber of education, etc.[21]

Pathos in Democratic Settings

As alluded to above, *pathos* as a mode of Rhetoric refers to the potentiality of the audience to be persuaded or dissuaded. Our interest in this section is to make a philosophical analysis of how political communication makes use of the emotional framework of the audience in order to reach the desired goals. Conversely, our discussion includes as well how the same emotional framework may be a factor for dissuasion.

Pathos and Eunoia: Focus on Background of the Audience

As pointed out earlier *eunoia* as goodwill of the speaker is a feature of the *ethos*. In this section we relate it to *pathos* with an aim of seeing how the same goodwill works on the audience's emotional disposition and framework to realize persuasion.

The electorate as human beings concretely situated in the world have their concerns, their anxieties, their joys and worries, etc. All these contribute to the electorate's emotional framework. Being in this psychological setting the electorate as the audience looks for, and is much more likely to be persuaded through a sympathetic and empathetic goodwill of a political speaker who identifies himself/herself with the electorate in what constitutes their *pathos*.[22]

The relationship between the goodwill of a political speaker and the emotional disposition of the electorate takes us into Aristotle's conception of Rhetoric as an offshoot of Ethics.[23] Rhetoric as essentially carrying a communicative relationship necessarily brings the speaker into an interactive contact with the audience.[24] This aspect of Rhetoric having the audience as its direct object makes it have ethical dimensions such as how it affects people, the intention of the speaker and the way he/she speaks, etc. An investigation of the ethical dimensions of Rhetoric extends to the analysis of the motive behind the speaker to see whether he/she is motivated by the goodwill or by the bad will, etc.

Aristotle relates goodwill with friendship which the speaker has with his/her audience.[25] He describes friendship as carrying a community-bond of togetherness.[26] Such friendship

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Barak D. Hoffman and James D. Long, "Parties, Ethnicity, and Voting in African Elections", *Comparative Politics,* (January 2013): 129.

[22] Higgins and Walker, *Ethos, Logos, Pathos,* 198.

[23] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I*, 1356a25-26.

[24] Kathleen Sandell Hardesty, *An(other) Rhetoric: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Rhetorical Tradition*, MA Thesis, (Tampa: University of South Florida, 2013), 4 – 5.

[25] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I*, 1378a19.

[26] *Id.*, *Nicomachean Ethics VIII*, 1159b25-34.

cultivates and pursues a certain common good which is advantageous to all.[27] With this relationship between goodwill and friendship we argue in the line of Aristotle, that political speakers motivated by goodwill rooted in friendship for the electorate are credible and trustworthy and thus persuasive.[28]

While relating Rhetoric and Ethics, we raise some ethical questions to see whether politicians in Africa do or do not take advantage of the electorate's emotional naivety. Is the emotional disposition of the electorate of any advantage to the electorate or rather it makes the electorate a fertile ground for political deception and manipulation for the advantage of immoral politicians? Are politicians in Africa true to their campaign words or it is rather lip-service for their own political glory for the detriment of their naïve electorate?

A politician with goodwill sympathizes with the electorate whose situation is expressed by emotions. Through the electorate's emotions he/she empathetically assumes people's situation for the transformation of their lives. He/she is responsible and accountable to the electorate by keeping his/her promises which are responsive to the electorate's emotional exigencies. In a word, goodwill-politics never turns people into political objects for manipulation. It rather sets morally right and workable goals which satiate the electorate's emotional thirst and hunger. It is objective and people-centered for the common good.

On the contrary, in the thinking of Aristotle, a political speaker without goodwill is not persuasive.[29] Such a political speaker is deceptive, manipulative, self-centered, and thus not for the common good. In case such lack of goodwill is known to the electorate it becomes a factor for losing credibility and trust, hence a reason for not being able to persuade.

Pathos and the Socio-cultural Tenets of the Audience

Each human society has its set of socio-cultural values it stands for and which contribute to its identity.[30] These include religious beliefs and practices, language, taboos, foods and medicines, social hierarchies, socio-economic activities, symbols, rules and norms, etc.[31] A political speaker wins credibility and trust, and thus emerges persuasive if he/she proves to cherish the socio-cultural tenets of the electorate.

Conversely, a political speaker who proves to be indifferent or opposed to what the electorate holds as culturally dear is likely to fail by losing credibility. For instance, among other factors which made President Daniel arap Moi less popular in some areas of Kenya with big and influential ethnicities was his approach of either discouraging or banning the valuable ethnic consciousness among such big tribes while unifying smaller ethnic communities.[32] This gives us a base to affirm that as a strategy, a political speaker has to be conscious of what his/her audience stands for as values. For instance, in the African context the emotions and sentiments of a pastoralist community are easily touched and politically swayed by speeches which guarantee safety, sustainability and markets of the livestock industry.[33]

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[27] *Ibid.*, *Nicomachean Ethics VIII*, 1160a9-11.
[28] William W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle's Practical Side on His Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric*, 296.
[29] *Ibid.*, 283.
[30] Sunday Awoniyi, "African Cultural Values: The Past, Present and Future", *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 17, no. 1 (2015): 3 – 4.
[31] Michael Frese, "Cultural Practices, Norms, and Values", in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46, 10 (2015): 1327.
[32] Shilaho Kwatemba, "Ethnicity and Political Pluralism in Kenya", *Journal of African Elections* 7, 2 (2008): 91.
[33] Willis Okumu, *et al.*, "The Role of Elite Rivalry and Ethnic Politics in Livestock Raids in Northern Kenya", *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55, no. 3 (2017): 482.

Still under *pathos* combined with a tactic use of *logos* a speaker uses riddles, metaphors, proverbs, allegories, etc. which touch the people's sentiments and thus create credibility. In his study Peter Ochieng Omollo describes Raila Odiga's political campaign in Kenya by using riddles, proverbs, stories, etc. as the way of making his message clear and persuasive.[34]

Pathos and Political Propaganda

Propaganda is another aspect of politics in Africa. Nancy Snow describes propaganda as "a sponsored information that uses cause- and emotion-laden content to sway public opinion and behaviour in support of the source's goal."[35] This description portrays propaganda as means of the speaker using the emotional framework of the audience to achieve his/her goal. Oberiri Destiny Apuke describes propaganda as carrying deception and distortion of truth for the advantage of the speaker.[36]

In the political arena, through propaganda, political speakers use rhetorical art to exploit and manipulate the emotional framework of the electorate. As Jacques Ellul maintains, a propagandist has a prior knowledge of his/her audience's psychological and sociological setups. He/she is well acquainted with the people's emotional framework, their tendencies, their likes and dislikes, their needs and concerns, their fears and anxieties, etc.[37] It is on such prior knowledge propaganda is used as a tool for shaping the audience's opinion and finally persuasively for influencing decision for the good of the speaker. As a tool of Rhetoric, propaganda is used in speeches given directly, through print media, trough radio broadcasts, through televisions, through the social media, etc. with an effect of influencing people's cognition, opinion and decision.[38]

There are cases in African politics that during political campaigns contesters use propaganda to reciprocate attacks in order to persuasively win the electorate through character assassination and mudslinging.[39] In such politics a propagandist political speaker commits a multifaceted immorality, first by exploiting and manipulating the electorate's emotions for his/her own gain, and secondly by tarnishing others' images. To achieve such goals through propaganda, rhetorical manipulative and fallacious skills such as name-calling, plain folks, bandwagon, etc. are used.[40]

Examples of manipulating the emotions and sentiments of the electorate through propaganda include the Rwanda's socio-political upheavals of the 1994.[41] In the country partly through the media, socio-political propagandists exploited the emotions of angry people and excited them

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[34] Peter Ochieng Omollo, *Rhetorical Devices and Forms of Oral Literature in the Speeches of Raila Odinga*, MA Thesis, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2017), 62 – 68.

[35] Nancy Snow, "Propaganda", *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*, (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2019): 1.

[36] Oberiri Destiny Apuke, "The Role of Social Media and Computational Propaganda in Political Campaign Communication", *Journal of Language and Communication*, 5, no. 2 (2018): 237.

[37] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 4.

[38] Oberiri Destiny Apuke, *The Role of Social Media and Computational Propaganda in Political Campaign Communication,* 225, 231, 233, 236 – 239.

[39] Ransford Edward Van Gyampo and Emmanuel Debrah, "The Youth and Party Manifestos in Ghanaian Politics: The Case of 2012 General Elections", *Journal of African Elections* 2 (2013): 96 - 97.

[40] These fallacious skills are treated in detail in the subsection on Fallacies in Political Communication.

[41] Johanna Vollhardt *et al*., "Deconstructing Hate Speech in the DRC: A Psychological Media Sensitization Campaign", *Journal of Hate Studies* 5, 15, (2006): 16.

to kill.[42] In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the media were reported of persuading people through propaganda which incited hatred either for the incumbents against the opposition or vice versa during the political campaigns for the 2006 general election.[43]

Logos with Political Communication

In Aristotle's doctrine on Rhetoric *logos* is a third mode of persuasion. It is a mode of commanding credibility and trust by the power of argument.[44] It is a mode of using principles and procedures of correct thinking, argumentation skills, proofs and evidences to persuade the audience that the speaker is credible and trustworthy. In matters of politics *logos* as a mode of persuasion is used to win the electorate by using and appealing to a logical way of communicating.

Persuasion by Right Reasoning

Among other things, logical communication involves a right selection of right words, appropriate message, right opportunity to communicate, proper audience to address and a right conclusion as the goal to achieve. It is in this understanding that Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* as practical wisdom comes in play. An ethical political speaker, through *phronesis* aims at reaching a morally upright political end by prudently picking the right logical means to achieve it.

In the mode of persuasion through *logos*, rhetoric speaks by itself. The argument convinces and persuades by its inherent power rooted in the right reasoning. It is on such grounds that in the Tanzanian political argumentation they speak of '*nguvu ya hoja*' as opposed to '*hoja ya nguvu*'.[45] These are phrases in Kiswahili Language which make a difference between an argument appealing to logical principles and an argument appealing to emotions respectively.

But what if the speaker is logical enough in his/her statements and arguments but his/her audience is not smart enough to comprehend the message? Such a riddle makes us to maintain that *logos* as a mode of persuasion does not work in isolation. The speaker needs to make recourse to other modes of persuasion in order to make logical communication fruitful. It was in such circumstances that Raila Odinga of Kenya used riddles, proverbs, stories, etc. in his campaign speeches to make his message simpler, clearer and thus more persuasive.[46]

Persuasion by Truth-Telling

Communication in the true sense of the concept involves transfer of true knowledge from one person to others. With this understanding, in this subsection we analyze *logos* as a mode of persuasion while basing on the power of truth carried by the logical arguments of the speaker. Describing the essence of truth Aristotle says:

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[42] David Yanagizawa-Drott, "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwanda Genocide", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129, 4, (2014): 1949.

[43] The Carter Center, *International Election Observation Mission to Democratic Republic of Congo 2006: Presidential and Legislative Elections Final Report*, (One Copenhill: The Carter Center, 2006), 51, 63, 77, 139, 141.

[44] Higgins and Walker, *Ethos, Logos, Pathos,* 198.

[45] The Kiswahili language phrase '*Nguvu ya hoja*' is literally translated into English as *force of an argument*, while '*Hoja ya nguvu*' is literally translated into English as *argument of force*. While the former is taken to be validly and soundly persuasive, the latter is taken to be fallaciously persuasive.

[46] Peter Ochieng Omollo, *Rhetorical Devices and Forms of Oral Literature in the Speeches of Raila Odinga*, 62 – 68.

To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.[47]

With reference to this quotation Aristotle describes truth of what it is while relating it with what it is not. In other words, he describes truth as contrasted to falsity. Again, he associates truth with speech in the sense that he describes it as conformity between speech and reality while falsity is described as disconformity between speech and reality.

Our interest here is to investigate the power of truth-telling in the whole process of winning credibility and trust from the audience. But does truth-telling in politics always lead to positive results? What if truth-telling ends up in adverse results if the audience is not opened to hear truth which is hard to assimilate? Is it morally and logically tenable in such cases if one resolves to use sweet talking which flatters his/her audience but resulting into persuasion? This is one the dilemmas in political public speaking for persuasion. Aristotle sheds light on the moral status of flattery by saying:

… the man who is pleasant in the right way is friendly and the mean is friendliness, while the man who exceeds is an obsequious person if he has no end in view, a flatterer if he is aiming at his own advantage…[48]

As the quotation goes, a pleasant talk which is both morally upright and persuasive is characterized by truth, moderation and altruism. It is a talk in which the speaker utters what conforms to reality, hence a true talk; it is not excessive in extremes but strikes a balance, hence observing the principle of the mean; and it is not for the advantage of the speaker, hence other-oriented. A rhetoric talks devoid of truth, expressing selfishness and lacking a mean-principle is a flattery which is both illogical and immoral. Such a flattering talk dehumanizes the audience by giving it false complements for the utilitarian advantage of the speaker.

Basing on the same quotation however, we assert that a pleasant talk is not necessarily devoid of truth. One can use rhetorical skills of conveying truth with a pleasant language which is friendly and persuasive. Again, a pleasant but truth-laden talk should be objective and altruistic for the good of the audience rather than for the egoistic interest of the speaker.

Persuasion through Proofs and Evidences
Persuasion by *Logos* involves also a right use of proofs and evidence. An argument is stronger and more persuading if it is backed by facts and figures which help make the speaker concrete and realistic. Proofs and evidences which have a rhetorical bearing, according to Aristotle, are those invented or constructed and spoken by the speaker.[49]

Proofs and evidence constructed and communicated through the speaker's words command persuasion through the credible personality of the speaker, through their inherent power of shaping or stirring the audience's mind, and through the speaking skills used to communicate.[50]

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[47] Aristotle, *Metaphysics I*, 1011b25.
[48] *Id.*, *Nicomachean Ethics II, 1108a27-28.*
[49] *Id.*, *Rhetoric I,* 1355b38-39; 1356a1.
[50] *Ibid.*, 1356a1-4.

The appealing qualities of the speaker as *ethos* act as proof and evidence for his/her trustworthiness and for the credibility of his/her speech's content. The art of constructing the proofs and evidences together with the logical skills of presenting them contribute to the persuasive power of the speaker's speech. Here, it is not enough that the speaker has proofs and evidences for what he/she speaks. It requires him/her to have an art of constructing them, and the skills of presenting them in such a way that they touch and influence the minds of the listeners. Lastly, the proofs and evidences play a persuasive role if they are skillfully spoken. This requires skills of picking the right words and saying such words in the right way which persuades the audience.[51]

Persuasion by logic in general applies both inductive and deductive methods. Induction is used by bringing onboard examples as individual cases in order to make an argument credible. Deduction is used by appealing to principles which make a base for a syllogistic reasoning from general truths as principles to persuading conclusions.[52] When induction is applied to political communication however, a careful and prudent selection of examples should be observed. While some examples or inductive particular cases have persuasive power, others may prove to have adverse and dissuasive effects depending on the nature of the audience. Supporting this assertion, we take cases from Tanzania that during the July 2020 processes of primary nomination of candidates to the October 2020 general election some candidates lost because of striking true but misplaced notes to the nominating committees.[53]

Fallacies in Political Communication

A fallacy is an argument based on false grounds which in one way or another is a falsification of rules of reasoning. The word *fallacy* is etymologically rooted from a Latin verb *fallere*, which means 'to deceive'. Basing on its etymological roots therefore, a fallacy is a false argument the conclusion of which is deceptive. A fallacy seems to resemble correct reasoning with a true conclusion. It is this seeming aspect which makes it deceptive. In short, any argumentation based on the transgression of rules of reasoning is a fallacy.

Some characteristic features of a fallacy relevant to this paper are deceptiveness and persuasiveness. It is deceptive in the sense that it does not lead to or does not result into the truth looked for. Even if a fallacious argument has a true conclusion its truth is not the required one, hence deceptive. A fallacy has a persuasive power as it seems to be valid to a naïve mind. At a quick glance it seems to be valid and sound. Most of the times, its faulty cannot be seen easily. It requires keenness and a critical approach to it in order to discover its faulty.

In the context of this paper, our discussion in this subsection is an analytical exposition of cases in which political speakers either intentionally or accidentally communicate by fallacies while aiming at persuading the electorate. Our exposition will fall in the same lines of Rhetoric which political speakers use as mode of persuasion. We shall put them in three categories. First, are fallacies that appeal to *ethos* as mode of persuasion. Secondly are fallacies by which speakers

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[51] James Nyachae Michira, "The Language of Politics: A CDA of the 2013 Kenyan Presidential Campaign Discourse", *International Journal of Education and Research* 2, no. 1 (2014): 2.

[52] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I,* 1356b1-10.

[53] Most of the nominating delegates in such committees were citizens either of the average or of the under-average calibers in education, in economic status, in experience, in exposure, etc. but with powers to determine the fate of candidates. Such delegates were pejoratively termed as '*wajumbe*' literally meaning 'delegates' but this time debased as demeaned delegates with decisive powers in their hands. There are cases in which educated, experienced and exposed candidates failed to persuade the '*wajumbe*' simply because they misplaced their *ethos* by claiming that they are educated, they are people of experience and of wide exposure.

erroneously or deceptively appeal to *pathos*, and thirdly are fallacies which entail a wrong use of the *logos* mode of persuasion.

Fallacies of Wrong Appeal to Ethos

As exposed earlier *pathos* is the rhetoric mode of persuasion by appealing to the credible and trustworthy personality of the speaker. In fallacies against *ethos*, a political speaker illicitly makes recourse to his/her personality or identifies his/her position with the *ethos* of another credible, trustworthy, influential big personality or political party. In such self-presentation the speaker makes irrelevant but seemingly convincing appeals either to qualities of himself/herself or to those of a big personality or of an influential party.

The kind of fallacy given above is *argumentum ad auctoritatem.* It is committed when one irrelevantly appeals to a personality or party with influence and convincing authority. Some authors call it a Big Man Syndrome. It is also termed as *argumentum ad verecundiam*. Political speakers in African politics commit this fallacy when they seek credibility by associating their positions with the political icons of African politics and history such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, etc. Political speakers deliver speeches by quoting or by making reference to such political gurus in order to persuade the electorate that their political philosophies emulate the philosophies of those political icons.

Another form of a fallacious appeal to the *ethos* of others is a negative one. This is *argumentum ad hominem* in which the speaker seeks to promote his/her *ethos* and make it credible and trustworthy by destroying the *ethos* of his/her adversary. This is the form of personality-based politics in which the speaker puts aside objective issues of common concern and focuses on the dark parts of the *ethos* of his/her adversary. In general *ad hominem* fallacy attacks the *ethos* of the adversary rather than his/her *logos*. This fallacy may be *abusive ad hominem, circumstantial ad hominem* or *et tu quoque ad hominem.*[54]

Abusive ad hominem is a fallacious argument in which the speaker uses weaknesses or defects in the personality of his/her opponent as the way of making his/her argument acceptable and persuasive. It is a fallacy which weakens the opponent by mentioning the dark side of his/her personality while such weaknesses have nothing to do with the argument he/she is advancing. This is an example of character assassination and mudslinging which characterise politics in some parts of Africa.[55] The fallacy is associated with *name-calling* which is a dirty rhetorical skill of giving to an adversary a nasty name as a way of weakening him/her.[56] David Bruce says that in South African politics, the ruling party ANC used a tactic of miss-presenting the policies of the opposition parties as a rhetoric skill of persuading the electorate against the opposition.[57]

Circumstantial ad hominem is a faulty argument which, in this context, a political speaker uses to make his/her argument accepted and persuasive by appealing to the unpopular circumstances that surround the personality of his/her opponent. It is a fallacy which makes the circumstances

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[54] Douglas N. Walton, "The Ad Hominem Argument as an Informal Fallacy", *Argumentation* 1, (1987): 317, 325.
[55] Heiko Meinhardt and Nandini Patel, *Malawi's Process of Democratic Transition: An Analysis of Political Developments between 1990 – 2003*, (Lilongwe: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003), 38.
[56] Isaac Olawale Albert, "A Review of the Campaign Strategies", *Journal of African Election* 6, no. 2 (2007): 71.
[57] David Bruce, *Just Singing and Dancing: Intimidation and the Manipulation of Voters and the Electoral Process in the Build-up to the 2014 Election*, (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2014), 37 – 38.

around the opponent as a ground to strengthen his/her argument while thus weakening the argument of the opponent. This fallacy touches issues like the bad history of the opponent, the tribe, the economic caliber, family background, etc. A political speaker illicitly uses such circumstances around the *ethos* of the opponent as a rhetorical capital for winning credibility before the electorate. Raila Odiga of Kenya for instance, used Uhuru Kenyatta's case at the International Criminal Court in 2013 to ridicule him and thus dissuade the electorate against him that in case Uhuru is re-elected into office he would lead Kenya from the defendant's box in the Hague Skype.[58]

Et tu quoque ad hominem (and you too...) is a claim of asserting one's argument by appealing to the inconsistency of his/her opponent's argument or actions. The inconsistence of the opponent be it in argument or in action, is falsely taken as a ground to claim one's argument sound. In this fallacy, one asserts his/her position by attacking the inconsistency rather than the position of the opponent.[59] This fallacy is committed in political campaigns when inconsistencies of personalities or their respective parties and manifestos are exploited for swaying the electorate's opinion and decision.

Fallacies of Wrong Appeal to Pathos

Pathos is the mode of persuasion through the emotional framework of the audience. In the context of fallacies, speakers transgress correct reasoning through wrong appealing to the audience's emotions. Such fallacies happen in forms of appeal to fear (*argumentum ad baculum*), appeal to popular sentiments (*argumentum ad populum*), appeal mercy (*argumentum ad misericordiam*), appeal to people's ignorance (*argumentum ad ignorantiam*), and appeal to repetition (*argumentum ad nauseam*).

Argumentum ad baculum is a fallacious skill in rhetoric of seeking persuasion by inflicting in the minds of people the fear of power and then exploit it as a means of persuasion. The Latin word '*baculum*' means a 'cane', a 'punitive stick' which in the context of this fallacy figuratively means fear-inducing power, tactics of scaring the audience, a tactical speech of inducing threat to make people embrace by force what the speaker stands for. As an example, David Bruce reveals that in South Africa, for fear of social and economic insecurity people get psychologically intimidated to identify themselves with the opposition parties against the ruling party which gives economic grants.[60]

The *ad baculum* fallacy, however, may not be taken to mean a direct threat by which, for instance, the audience accepts or embraces a certain claim at a gunpoint. Instead, it is a scare tactic given in the form of an argument in order to incite the emotion of fear among the listeners. The audience embraces the speaker's argument not because the argument is deductively valid and sound, not because the argument is inductively strong, not because its conclusion is true. The audience accepts the argument because of fear of the abhorrent consequences suggested in its conclusion.

Argumentum ad populum is a fallacy in which one makes efforts to make his/her argument accepted either by appealing to the popular opinion (what many people say or hold as dear) or

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[58] Stefanie Hogins, *Uhuru Kenyatta vs. International Criminal Court: Narrative of Injustice and Solidarity*, Research Paper, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2015), 24.
[59] Walton, *The Ad Hominem Argument as an Informal Fallacy,* 317.
[60] Bruce, *Just Singing and Dancing,* 23 – 26.

by manipulating the big number of people's emotions depending on the nature, history and size of an audience. This is the fallacy committed in political campaigns and propaganda where principles of reasoning are compromised by appealing to passions of the mob. Another form of this fallacy is *bandwagon*[61]. This is an uncritical embracing of something or some idea simply because it is a fashion. In politics, the electorate may be swayed by what is fashionable or a majority-choice at the expense of what is beneficial.

Ad poplum fallacy is often committed in African communities in which, for instance, a big number of people hold religions as dear. In such communities political speakers identify themselves as God-fearing and devout in order to win the people's confidence.[62] According to James Nyachae Michira, in the campaigns for the 2013 general elections in Kenya people's sentiments were swayed by politicians pretending to wear popular pious and religious faces in order to persuade the masses of believers.[63]

Another fallacy under this category is *argumentum ad misericordiam*. This is a fallacy in which a speaker incites pity and mercy of the audience in order to make his/her argument sound and thus persuasive. It is a fallacy which moves the audience to be sympathetic to the speaker or to his/her cause and take him/her as credible and trustworthy not by power of any evidence but rather by power of pity and mercy. In this fallacy, the political speakers touch and move the sentiments of the electorate at the expense of the principles of reasoning.[64] Another form of *ad misericordiam* fallacy is that of *plain folks*. This happens when a politician sways people's emotion by pretending to be sympathetically identical with them in their miseries. A political speaker, therefore, persuades the electorate by pretending to wear their shoes as part of bringing a solution to the misery. It is a tactic by which a political speaker seemingly sides with the ordinary people in their difficult situation.[65]

Still in the sphere of *pathos* another fallacy committed in political communication is *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. This is the fallacy with which a speaker commands credibility by either taking advantage of the lack of contrary evidence or appealing to the ignorance of the audience as the ground for his/her argument to be valid and persuasive.[66] In politics the electorate is easily persuaded if it is not possible to challenge the speaker, or if his/her adversary has no evidence to make him/her incredible. In political contests prominent and experienced politicians commit this fallacy by taking advantage of the ignorance of the electorate or of the adversary's lack of evidence that can sway the electorate to a different direction.

Argumentum ad nauseam is another fallacy under the category of *pathos* by which one seeks to falsely persuade the audience through repetition.[67] This is a fallacy mostly committed in commercial advertisements or in propaganda in which something appears frequently as a means of enforcing its credibility. In the context of politics, political propagandists either sell themselves or sell their candidates or their ideologies by making strategic coverage in the

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[61] Niamika El Khoiri and Utami Widiati, "Logical Fallacies in Indonesian EFL Learners' Argumentative Writing: Students' Perspectives", *Dinamika Ilmu* 17, no. 1 (2017): 73.

[62] Michira, *The Language of Politics*, 14.

[63] *Ibid*., 4 – 15.

[64] Andrews Atta-Asamoah*, East Africa Report: The Nature and Drivers of Insecurity in Kenya*, 2, (April, 2015), 10. In Kenya political campaigns among others, exploit people's pitiful history of landownership injustices to attract credibility from the electorate.

[65] Clare Benit-Gbaffou, *Popular Politics in South African Cities – Unpacking Community Participation*, (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2015), 208 – 209.

[66] Martin David Hinton, "On Arguments from Ignorance", *Informal Logic* 38, 2, (2018): 185.

[67] Carrie McLaren and Jason Torchinsky, eds., *Ad Nauseam*, (New York: Faber and Faber Inc., 2009), 9.

media, in the public platforms, in social gathering, etc. in order to influence the public opinion basing on a faulty belief that the more frequent something is, the more credible it is.

Fallacies of Wrong Use of Logos

The third category of fallacies committed in political communication in the process of persuasion is the category of the wrong use of *logos*. This is a category of fallacies which involve transgressions of the principles of correct reasoning. The defects are in the mode and in the means of communication in such a way that either the speaker's reasoning skills fail to persuade or persuade deceptively. Fallacies of this category are as numerous as the principles of reasoning which they contravene. We therefore confine our discussion on those fallacies which are frequently or most likely to be committed in political rhetoric.

We begin with the *Straw man fallacy*. This is a faulty argument in which a speaker misinterprets his/her adversary in order to make this misrepresentation a ground to weaken the latter's position.[68] Political contesters assert themselves by misinterpreting their adversaries as a malicious rhetorical skill of winning credibility. The fault of this kind of fallacy is in the presumption that misinterpretation of the adversary guarantees credibility of the speaker.

Non causa pro causa is another fallacy of this category. The Latin phrase '*non causa pro causa*' is interpreted in English as '*attributing a wrong cause to an effect*'.[69] In the political arena something or someone or a certain policy is erroneously branded as a cause of a certain unpleasant reality. The error of this fallacy lies in putting a wrong link between two realities whereby one is falsely accused of being a cause of the other – all aiming at persuasion. In such a situation, a political speaker uses such a scenario to persuade the audience that he/she is the right person for the solution. Positively put, oftentimes political speakers claim to be masterminds of others' achievements as a way to cultivate credibility.

Attributing a wrong cause to an unpleasant effect is also associated with a *slippery slope fallacy*.[70] This is a faulty argument by which one maintains that since a harmful event has occurred then other harmful events will follow. Incumbent political contesters are likely to fall prey of attacks by their adversaries using this fallacy. If their incumbency or their party has some dark sides as effects of their work, then their opponents fallaciously give alarming calls to the electorate to expect the worse in case no serious changes are made in the political leadership.[71]

Another faulty communication under this category is the *fallacy of generalization*. It is committed in a variety of forms. First is the *Fallacy of Accident* by which a general rule is wrongly applied to a particular case which is special. Second is the *Fallacy of Hasty Generalization* by which one makes a general conclusion while basing on one or on few unreliable particular cases. Third is the *Fallacy of Composition* which is a faulty argument the error of which is to take attributes of the individual component parts to be the same attributes of the whole made by such parts. Fourth is the *Fallacy of Division* by which one mistakenly

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[68] Robert Talisse and Scott F. Aikin, "Two Forms of the Straw Man", *Argumentation* 20, (2006): 345.
[69] El Khoiri and Widiati, *Logical Fallacies in Indonesian EFL Learners' Argumentative Writing: Students' Perspectives,* 73.
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] Atta-Asamoah *East Africa Report: The Nature and Drivers of Insecurity in Kenya*, 11.

takes the attributes of the composed whole to be the same attributes of each component part taken individually.[72]

Political speeches for persuasion are likely to involve illogical generalizations. It is a *fallacy of division* for instance, to maintain that each Member of Parliament from a well performing party will necessarily perform well simply because his/her party has a record of good performance. Conversely, it is equally a *fallacy of composition* to claim that the well performing members of parliament are *ipso facto* a proof and evidence that their respective party is a good performing one.

In African political campaigns contestants oftentimes use the power, the fame and influence of their respective political parties and ethnicities for persuasion rather than using their own *ethos* and *logos*. Such rhetoric is both a *Fallacy of Division* and the *Ad Auctoritatem Fallacy*. The fame and good performance of the whole taken holistically is not necessarily a ground for the fame and good performance of its part taken individually. One can belong to a good and well delivering political party but still prove a failure as an individual.

In African politics there are scenarios of merging political parties and merging ethnic groups with an aim of asserting some individual politicians by making their host groups strong. There are cases in which such moves have proved fallacious. Oftentimes such mergers result into democratic victories of winning in elections, but not necessarily into good performance of their individual candidates. While believing in the philosophy that 'unity is power' such mergers which are strong in themselves do not necessarily prove strength and good delivery of their respective political candidates, hence the *Fallacy of Division*.[73]

Conclusion and Recommendations

By *ethos* a political speaker persuades the electorate through his/her personality and the quality of his/her party to distinguish himself/herself from his/her opponents. He/she also wins credibility by using proper *logos* by which he/she persuades through the strength, integrity and clarity of his/her arguments. A good understanding and a proper touching of the electorate's *pathos* as the emotional framework puts him/her in a better position to prove persuasive. With these modes of Rhetoric, a political contestant can miss one and still prove persuasive.

Being of a selling *ethos* such as having good character, being experienced and a person of exposure, educated, rich etc. does not necessarily guarantee persuasion. Conversely as well, being poor in *logos* and *pathos* does not necessarily make a contestant lose credibility. One can still win it depending on the party he/she belongs to. What is needed for one to speak persuasively is a skillful and well-balanced combination of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.

In relation to persuasion by Aristotle's modes of Rhetoric, we have some recommendations to make. First, African politicians have to make use of Aristotle's Rhetoric Theory. With this theory they have to bear personalities which are objectively sellable and capable of credible delivery. Their *ethos* should not be confined to their personalities and ethnicities but should be broader to integrate political parties with a national face and reputation. This means, the

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[72] James E. Gough and Mano Daniel, "The Fallacy of Composition", *Argument Cultures: Proceedings of OSSA 09, CD-ROM,* Windsor, (2009): 2 – 7.

[73] Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack W. Nasong'o, "Bent on Self-Destruction: The Kibaki Regime in Kenya", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, 1, (2006): 1 – 2.

politicians' *ethos* should be national rather than regional or ethnic. In short, persuasion by *ethos* in Africa should be disbanded from ethnic and tribal affiliations. Instead, it should be a national *ethos* standing for the national interests.

Secondly, we recommend that Rhetoric as an art of persuasive speaking should go with ethical principles. Persuasion by *pathos* should not be manipulative by taking advantage of the electorate's emotional framework. Voters as human beings should be respected in their human dignity rather than taking them as objects for swaying to the interests of politicians. There are evidences from Africa that mishandling of the electorate's emotional being is likely to result into violence, deaths and socio-political instabilities.

As our third recommendation, persuasion by *logos* should go hand-in-hand with correct reasoning and truth-telling. Fallacious speaking which sways the electorate to make politicians seem credible is deceptive and thus immoral. Even if such political contestants emerge competent and well performing after being in office, we deem the whole scenario as immoral because the good end is not a justification of the deceptive means they used to assume political positions.

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