

death?” Of course, the persuasiveness of the argument is dependent on whether the two acts are similar. If they aren’t, then one act could be wrong and the other right.

The arguments described above are fallacious because, even though they may be relevant to the claims they are making, their premises or evidence is insufficient to establish the claims.

Additional fallacies of sufficiency include:

Improper appeal to practice: this fallacious argument assumes that a person is justified in doing things that are common practice, even if that practice clearly is wrong. “Why should I pay the women in my business wages equal to men? Other businesses pay men more, so I should be able to do the same.”

Fallacy of composition: in this fallacious argument, the evidence is drawn from some part of a whole but the conclusion is about the whole.²⁰ “Tim Howard, the keeper for Manchester United, is a superb keeper. Therefore, Manchester United is one of the best football teams in Europe.” Manchester United may well be a superb football team, but this argument nevertheless, makes a fallacious statement about the relationship of the part (keeper) to the whole (team).

Fallacy of division: in this fallacious argument, the evidence is drawn from the whole, but the conclusion is made about the part. The argument assumes that what is true of the whole must be true of its constituent parts. “Harvard is an excellent university; therefore Lawrence Tribe, who is a law professor at Harvard, must be an excellent professor.” Like the above example, the claim may be correct, but the reasoning is fallacious because it makes an improper statement about the relationship between the whole (Harvard) and its constituent parts (Professor Tribe).

Post hoc: this fallacy, also called by its full Latin name *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, means “after this, therefore because of this.” The fallacy comes from assuming that because one thing predates another, the first must have caused the second. A person may argue, “After George W. Bush took office, the U.S. economy went into a recession; thus, Bush’s policies were the cause of the recession.” Whether Bush’s policies contributed to the recession has not been argued well here. The debater has simply assumed a cause-and-effect relationship.

Faulty analogy: this fallacy occurs when two cases are compared to each other but are not similar in terms of the relationship stated in the comparison. Speaking at the Republican National Convention, former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani compared George W. Bush and Winston Churchill, implying that Bush is the Churchill of our times. Several newspapers responded that the comparison was faulty. For instance: “Sir, Winston Churchill’s enemy was a powerful, determined dictator; President Bush’s conflict is with a shadowy nemesis and his small band of idolaters, set on destruction rather than conquest. Mr Churchill welcomed allies; Mr Bush would happily ‘go it alone.’”

The preceding fallacies are related to the standard of sufficiency. In the pre-