

Biases in Decision-Making and Policy Development

Understanding Potential Impacts on ICANN

NextGen82

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ICANN Multistakeholder Model

- ❑ ICANN is designed to be a community-driven, multi-stakeholder organization, where all voices can participate in decision-making about the global internet infrastructure
- ❑ Many perspectives are considered throughout the policy-making process in attempts to eliminate any potential bias, but bias still occurs

What is bias and why is it important?

- ❑ Bias can be described as a decision-inhibiting process
 - ❑ Bias is the tendency hold an outlook or judgement, for many different reasons, though all affecting the way we make decisions
- ❑ As an organization that develops policies impacting global internet governance, it's critical to understand how biases affect decision-making.
- ❑ Bias does not have to intentional to have an effect on the decisions and policies we make

Availability Bias

- ❑ **Availability bias** - a bias that is a result of the easiest and most available information (Ahmad et al., 2021)
- ❑ Why is this important?
 - ❑ The presence of the information we see can affect who we view matters and what we view as more important when making a decision

Confirmation Bias

- ❑ **Confirmation bias** - the search of information that confirms one initial belief while disconfirming conflicting information (Guo & Shing, 2025).
- ❑ How can confirmation bias hinder effective policy-making?
 - ❑ May interfere with the types of policies created and the arguments for or against presented issues

Self-Selection Bias

- ❑ **Self-Selection Bias** - a bias that occurs due to the sorting of one's self to a preferred environment (Houdek, 2017).
- ❑ Why is the self-selection bias important to consider when looking at institutions like ICANN?
 - ❑ Many participants at ICANN have prior experience with ICANN, have worked with ICANN in the past, etc.
 - ❑ Meaning, the self-selection/participation at ICANN may not always be fully representative of the population of which they represent

How can bias still occur if ICANN is community based?

- ❑ Even though ICANN meetings are public and inclusive, not everyone still knows about ICANN and it's mission
- ❑ Additionally, ICANN is a largely made of volunteers
 - ❑ Meaning, not everyone has opportunity to connect to ICANN
 - ❑ Meaning those who are involved likely have more exposure to ICANN work than the general population

References

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