

## CONFIRMATION BIAS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ARGUMENTATION THEORY

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### Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, many areas of humanities, which sought to combine their efforts in researching various social phenomena, have been rapidly developing. It is about theories of argumentation, communication, practical philosophy, psychology, behavioral economics, etc. On the one hand, the factors that prevent a person from acting rationally are analyzed, and on the other hand, various techniques for achieving success by a person in communication, activities, etc., are developed. To date, many cognitive biases or illusions have been established, under the influence of which a person usually does not act rationally. The authors of the publication (Pohl, 2004) divide cognitive illusions into three groups: thinking, judgment, and memory. They consider confirmation bias as an illusion of thinking. In this regard, it is promising to investigate this bias in the context of the modern argumentation theory, the sources of which were historically such ancient disciplines as logic, dialectics, and rhetoric.

### Methodology

The research uses the comparative method and general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis primarily.

### Results

Since it is hardly possible to eliminate cognitive biases, the task is primarily to reduce their negative impact on the processes of thinking, reasoning, and decision-making. It became particularly relevant during the full-scale war that Russia started against Ukraine a year ago. It is also important for Ukraine and the entire civilized

world to win the information war, in which the entire population that uses various mass media is involved, so as not to become the object of the influence of Russian narratives, which are promoted by the aggressor country through various channels, relying in particular on confirmation bias.

To navigate the world around them, people have their own sets of beliefs that allow them to do so more or less successfully. To do this, they create and test various hypotheses. Confirmation bias significantly affects such processes. Since it pierces out as a cognitive illusion, it is not about any intentional fakes, but about information processing forms that are mostly unintentional: «'Confirmation bias' means that information is searched for, interpreted, and remembered in such a way that it systematically impedes the possibility that the hypothesis could be rejected – that is, it fosters the immunity of the hypothesis» (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004, p.79).

Argumentation strategies developed by representatives of modern argumentation theory, in particular pragma-dialectics, take into account the above-mentioned biases at different levels. For example, when preparing for a discussion, it is necessary not only to think through one's standpoint and arguments for its defense but also objections from the opponent's side and possible answers to these objections. It is quite useful «...to anticipate what position the other party will probably take and what their background in the subject matter is. What is their standpoint likely to be? What arguments might they use? What objections might they raise against your arguments?» (van Eemeren et al., 2002, p.172), even if the participant does not know for sure who will be their opponent. In addition, critical questions matching various argumentation schemes are developed (van Eemeren et al., 2002; Macagno et al., 2017). They are precisely aimed at overcoming the negative consequences of confirmation bias, which can significantly affect the outcome of argumentation, that is the opponent's conviction.

To sum up, it should be noted that modern research in the fields of humanities and behavioral sciences bears witness that people are under the influence of a large number of cognitive illusions, which it is hardly possible to get rid of finally. Therefore, it remains important to develop effective methods of critical thinking, the use of which reduces the risks caused by cognitive biases in argumentation and decision-making both at the level of everyday communication and in matters of a scientific and socially important nature.

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