

Light my Fire!

A short introduction into social psychology
for LGBTQI+ campaigning, to spark your imagination.



**SOGI
CAMPAIGNS**



Foreword

Whatever change you are trying to make, you need to win hearts and minds to win acceptance of sexual and gender diversities.

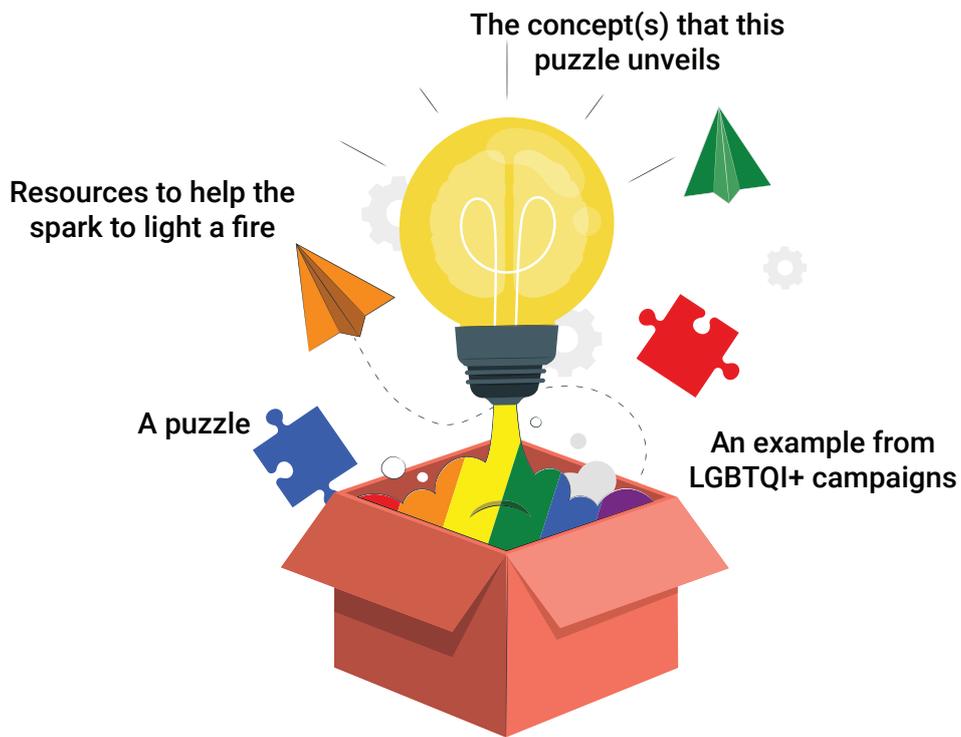
But the Human heart and mind are strange creatures, sometimes defying logic, often 'puzzling' common sense.

But most puzzles have solutions, and finding them brings great satisfaction.

This publication is about presenting some of these puzzles, and some solutions imagined by LGBTQI+ campaigners. We hope these examples will be sparks that will light your fire and inspire you to dive deeper into the world of the Human heart and mind.



Each of these sparks contain:



We acknowledge of course that under authoritarian and repressive regimes, public campaigning in general is restricted and the examples provided will not be relatable. We therefore encourage everyone to focus more on the social psychology concepts than on the replicability of the examples. We also acknowledge that many of the social psychology studies have been conducted in WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) countries, and must be handled with extra care in other contexts. Nevertheless, we hope this content provides food for thought to everyone.

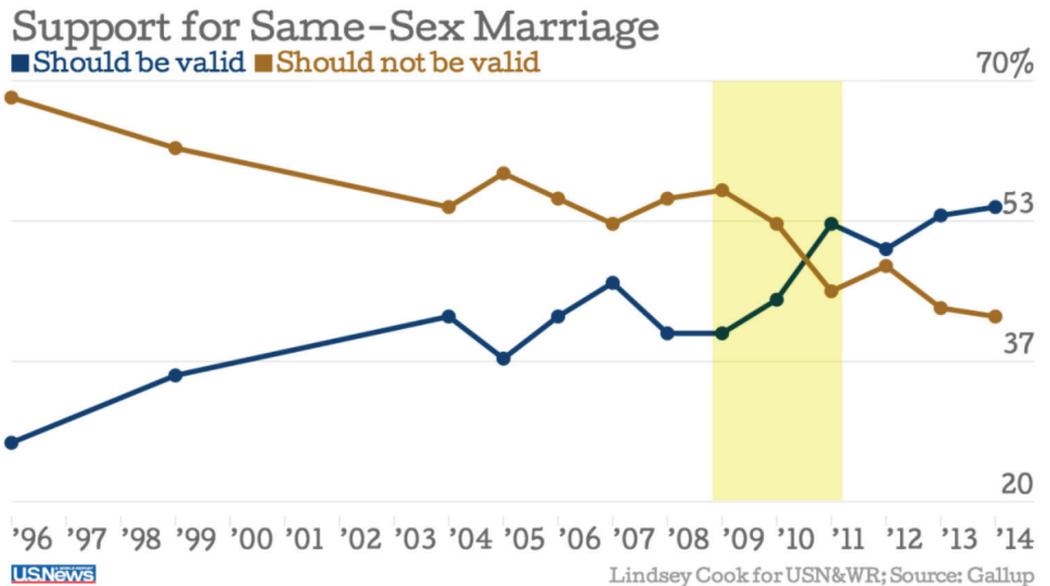


VALUES SPEAK TO THE HEART



The Puzzle

In the USA, since the 1970s, the majority of the public believe that gay and lesbian people "should have equal rights at work". By the 1990s the majority believed that "same-sex relationships should be legal". Yet we lost 30 local campaigns for same-sex marriage in a row in the years 2000. Then around 2009 this happened...



That's right - in 2 years public support for marriage equality rose as much as it had done in the 13 years beforehand - finally achieving majority support and soon after winning legal same sex marriage. **How did this happen?**



The concept to take away

According to campaign organisers, the fundamental reason was a shift in communication strategy. Initially, campaigners followed a rational approach that focused on rights and benefits, thinking that rationale and compelling arguments would persuade people. And yet it didn't.

However, when they instead started emphasising the values of love, commitment and family by telling stories about same-sex couples and their friends and families, they found that those difficult audiences became more supportive.

Communication around emotions and values achieved what the rational mind couldn't.

Values are the fundamental principles we find important: like 'honesty' or 'forgiveness' but also 'tradition' or 'power'.

In your context there will probably be some people who prioritise values in a similar way to you - but there will probably not be enough of them to bring the change you want. On the other side, there will be people who prioritise completely opposite sets of values, and they may take up much of your attention because they confuse, anger, or even threaten you. In the middle are people who share some values with you, and who could be persuaded to tweak the way they express these values to be consistent with acceptance of sexual and gender diversities.





How this works for LGBTQI+ campaigns

In the Philippines, progress on a SOGIE Equality Bill has been stalled for over two decades, so the Philippine Anti-Discrimination Alliance of Youth Leaders (PANTAY) wanted to find ways of increasing public pressure on decision makers. They researched their target audiences and found that many were unclear about why the bill was necessary: “but you already have [equality]” was a common response. Clearly, the “rational” approach was not working.

The organisation did more research into their target audience and uncovered the two elements that resonated most: **happiness and family values**.

So they developed the new campaign message:

“**In a family with equality, life is happy.**”

They integrated this messaging into all their campaigning actions. It also opened up creative new ideas for campaigning, such as around Valentine's Day and the International Day of Happiness.



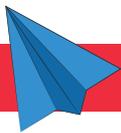
PANTAY

20 March at 15:53 · 🌐



Happy International Day of Happiness! Happiness is better shared so let's create space for everyone together. ❤️

It's happier if there's equality! 🌈



If this spark has fired you up to learn more...

Are you a visual learner? [This 2 minute video uses animation](#) to explain the overlap between you and your audiences' values.

Do you prefer some more step-by-step instruction? Sign up and go straight to 'Lesson 6' of the [Sogi Campaigns e-learning course on 'Campaign Communication'](#) to identify values in your audience and what values are helpful for LGBTI+ + campaigners to focus on.





PRIMING

TRIGGER YOUR AUDIENCE



The Puzzle

In a social experiment, two similar groups of Asian-American women were given a maths test. Before the test, the first group was shown a video about being Asian and the second group a video about being a woman. Astonishingly, one group performed better at the test than the other.



The concept to take away

The group that was “reminded” that they were Asian performed significantly better than the group that was “reminded” they were women. To understand this effect, you need to know that in the USA stereotypes say that women are bad at maths while Asians are good at it. Only by reminding participants of the former or the latter had an influence over their behaviour/ performance.

The way that people think of themselves has a huge influence over how they think and act. Everyone holds a range of different views of themselves, sometimes contradictory. For example someone can consider themselves as open-minded, yet with strong opinions; as combative yet caring, generous yet a strong believer in self-sufficiency. Campaigns can trigger the former or the latter. This is one of the many ways to “prime” people. Basically, addressing people as this or that will produce very different results.





How this works for LGBTQI+ campaigns

Moldova is a socially conservative country where 62% of adults say LGBT people should be 'excluded' from the country². However, when members of the public were asked on the street...

...their answers to the next question "Do you think gay or Trans kids should be protected?" were often much more positive than if they had been asked this question directly.



CLICK
HERE
TO WATCH

In this example, getting audiences to think of themselves as people who care for children was a necessary first step to get them to act in that way towards LGBTQI+ people too. Every time we communicate with people, we always (consciously or not) prime them in some way. Being aware of this, and making the most strategic use of it, is key to successful communication.



If this spark has fired you up to learn more...

How might this work on a religious leader? Or a journalist? Or a grandparent? The ['Tactics for mobilisation'](#) lesson in the course on Campaign Communication helps you to practice those variations, as well as to go deeper into how to get a *'foot in the door'* or even a *'door in the face'*!

[PIRC & ILGA-Europe, Framing Equality Toolkit, p.31 "Speak to People's Best Self"](#)



COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Don't prove people wrong



The Puzzle

Psychologists recruited two groups with opposite views:

one group believed 'homosexuality is an illness', the other group did not. Presented with scientific evidence that homosexuality was not an illness, the former group did actually not change its mind. Confronted with scientific evidence against their beliefs, they instead decided that science had no relevance to this topic, and this effect even carried over to other topics like vaccinations.

In other words, people would rather reject science itself rather than reject their previous homophobic opinions³.

Why? What can we do about it?



The concept to take away

This example illustrates the concept of "cognitive dissonance": When people are faced with facts or new pieces of information that conflict with their feelings, it makes them uncomfortable. A lot of us, a lot of the time, will resolve this '**cognitive dissonance**' by rejecting the new piece of information and clinging even more to past attitudes. The classic example of this is people who are led to believe that the End of The World will happen on a particular day, and when they are proven wrong their belief only deepens!

It seems that acknowledging one's mistakes is one of the most difficult things for a human being to do.

Social research has shown that when people are corrected for spreading fake news, their reaction is to be vexed and to spread even more fake news later. But a simple accuracy nudge—asking people to judge the accuracy of a random headline—improves the quality of the news they subsequently share. The lesson here is that it doesn't pay to tell people they have been conned. As is often the case in campaigning, attacking people upfront can backfire and make them more entrenched in their positions⁴.

3. Munro, G. D., & Ditto, P. H. (1997). Biased Assimilation, Attitude Polarization, and Affect in Reactions to Stereotype-Relevant Scientific Information. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(6), 636-653. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258180609_Biased_Assimilation_Attitude_Polarization_and_Affect_in_Reactions_to_Stereotype-Relevant_Scientific_Information

4. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/93ybay/confronting-disinformation-spreaders-on-twitter-only-makes-it-worse-mit-scientists-say>





How this works for LGBTQI+ campaigns

Most campaigns on LGBTI+ issues choose to focus on values, not information. Yet, when information does become a necessary part of the content of the campaign, for example when the target group is bombarded with disinformation, campaigners have often chosen a non-confrontational approach.



Yeah so two girls are gonna be able to buy a house together...

In this campaign in Romania, correct information about the effects of same-sex partnership legislation was embedded in a wider message about what the real priorities are for Romanians, communicated in a very humoristic way.



Viața ta **nu se va schimba.**

They wouldn't have gone for you even if they were into guys.



If this spark has fired you up to learn more...

- We have a course solely about disinformation with a specific '[cognitive dissonance](#)' lesson.
- Find this, and 200+ other case studies on [Sogicampaigns](#)

