

Strategic Intervention Papers (SIPs): An Introduction

- Strategic Intervention Papers (SIPs) are researched and published to provide countries with an instrument to sharpen their problem-solving skills, in a sustained effort to strengthen the resilience especially of Western democracies.
- SIPs use comparative policy analysis that extends across the full range of the political economy to present constructive, future- and solutions-oriented proposals for action that are disseminated to the public at large via targeted media work. Our SIPs challenge entrenched decision-making logics and counteract the political sclerosis that erodes trust in democracy.
- The GIC's strategic interventions take two forms. The first uses the powerful but underused tool of cross-border learning. The second focuses on overcoming domestic obstacles to democratic action. Taken together, these tools change the meaning of "globalism" by focusing on the ability to arrive cooperatively at ways to solve pressing problems, rather than placing that capacity solely into the hands of impersonal institutions.
- A SIP expands the space for possible solutions in politics and society by constructively pointing out alternative approaches or courses of action. It introduces possibilities for solving a specific problem that have been overlooked

or ruled out because of the entrenched patterns of argument in a given country. It increases the range of concrete options worth pursuing by explaining what has succeeded elsewhere, how it worked and why it might be worth considering adoption in a suitable form.

- The strategic interventions pursued by the GIC often have a cross-border character. We rely on the principle that democracies can learn from other democracies. The operational reason for this is that they all face, if not the same, then at least very similar problems. It is self-evident that any veritable democracy, as a permanent learning system, can learn from others that have already developed solutions to the problem at hand. Yet, such learning does not happen nearly as often as it should.
- Cross-border learning thus is a tool with strong potential to overcome domestic political blockages. In addition, this tool constructively counteracts the argument, often put forward by reform blockers, that a step may only be taken once it can be based on existing empirical evidence and scientific studies. After all, a solution that has already succeeded abroad definitely offers a relevant empirical point of reference.
- However, the Strategic Interventions of the GIC do not always require a cross-border comparison. At times, political decision-making processes are blocked by purely domestic habits of thought or action.

In such cases, a SIP aims to introduce methods and arguments to expand the space for fresh thought and new possibilities in policy and politics. This starts with the conscious and democratically responsible questioning of ingrained blockades, in such a way that political decision-makers and the public at large may consider new patterns of thought and action.

- One standout feature of the GIC's Strategic Intervention Papers is that, in contrast to the practice of many other think tanks, they do not revolve solely around the "big" questions of politics but also deal with everyday issues. This is intentional, because it is precisely when a country has a backlog of failures to act on such issues that its citizens begin to lose trust in democracy.

1. Common starting point: stagnation due to conflict logic

The political culture in many democracies is focused on conflict rather than resolution. The recruitment and career paths of politicians reward those who attack their political opponents. Fact-oriented problem solvers with strong negotiation skills receive scant systematic support.

The consequences are visible:

- Political processes are organized to defend party and group interests.
- As urgent problems remain unsolved, citizens are left as spectators to successive controversies instead of experiencing the benefits of progress.
- Democracy is perceived as structurally incapable of decision-making and implementation. This does much more than attacks by populists to undercut its legitimacy.

SIPs address precisely this dysfunction by systematically shifting the reference logic of political decisions.

2. Methodological innovation: Triple shift

SIPs represent an innovation due to a threefold shift of reference points:

1. From national tunnel vision to international comparison

Political controversies no longer stay confined within national boundaries. Neither should their solutions. With that in mind, SIPs place key issues in a European and international context and make visible how other countries have solved similar problems.

2. From abstract disputes to behavior-changing practices

SIPs explain concrete solutions and specific practices in legislation, administration and institutions and introduce them into a national discourse where they have not been tried. Our aim is not to make yet another normative appeal, but to effect an actual change in the behavior and routines of an increasingly calcified set of political actors.

3. From "Can't-Do" to "Can-Do"

The presentation of solutions tried and tested outside a given nation's boundaries narrows the scope for those seeking to block progress on policymaking. This approach could rest on the longstanding political tenet that "if you're explaining, you're losing," meaning here that anyone who wants to prevent reforms domestically must now explain why a policy that succeeded in another country would be unsuitable at home. Meanwhile, reform-oriented forces can stand on reliable comparative evidence and give solid form to abstract debates.

3. Methodological implementation: How SIPs work

SIPs follow a clear structure:

- **Comparative problem analysis:**

Starting from a concrete national problem, each of our SIPs examines which countries have already faced the same policy challenge, which instruments have been used there and what results have been achieved in solving it. Digital tools and AI support our research and evaluation process.

- **Specify the strategic intervention:**

Our key findings are condensed in a Strategic

Intervention Paper that seeks out specific points of intervention: It asks, where does the national path need to be structurally redirected to move from the status quo toward a viable solution?

- **Calls to Action:**

In addition to medium- and long-term reform proposals, each SIP contains concrete short-term actions (such as limited pilot projects, regulatory adjustments and administrative decisions) to make change visible at an early stage and politically compatible to the country in question.

4. Media and communication: amplifying the impact

In order for SIPs to be most effective, they are combined with a strategic communication approach:

- Reaching the public through cooperation with the media, including guest editorials, interviews and the publication of explanatory formats about the solutions found.
- Use of social media (especially LinkedIn, possibly Instagram) as well as radio and podcast formats to distribute the content in a way that is appropriate for each target audience.
- This also influences political decision-makers

In this way, SIPs become real **intervention papers**: they not only provide analysis, but also shift decision-making logics, behavioral patterns and public debates toward solution-oriented democracy.

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Bullet structure for presentation slides

Slide 1 - Title & Core Idea

- Title: **Strategic Intervention Papers (SIPs): A New Instrument for Solution-Oriented Democracy**
- Subheading: Comparative Policy Analysis + Concrete Intervention + Strategic Communication

Slide 2 - Problem diagnosis

- Political culture: conflict-oriented instead of solution-oriented
- Recruitment: Reward for attack rhetoric, not problem-solving
- The result: stagnation, growing mountains of problems, loss of confidence in democratic ability to act

Slide 3 - Why SIPs?

- Answer to the question: "Another paper - what for?"
- SIPs attack the **logic of decision-making**, not just individual policy details
- Goal: from blockade and defense logic to learning and implementation competence

Slide 4 - Methodological innovation

- Twofold:
 - Methodological: new logic of justification and reference
 - Methodological: clear procedures for practice
- Triple Displacement:
 - National → international comparative
 - Abstract dispute → concrete practical examples
 - "Can't-Do" → "Can-Do" orientation

Slide 5 - Step 1: Comparative analysis

- Starting point: concrete national problem area
- Identification of countries with relevant solution attempts
- Evaluation of:
 - Legislation
 - Administrative practice
 - institutional arrangements
- Support through digital tools / AI for evidence search

Slide 6 - Step 2: Strategic Intervention Paper

- Structure of a SIP:
 - Precise problem description
 - Comparative case analysis
 - Derivation of specific intervention points
- Focus: structural redirection of the policy path, not just "fine-tuning"

Slide 7 - Step 3: Calls to Action

- Medium to long-term reform proposals:
 - Legislative and institutional changes
- Short-term measures:
 - Pilot projects
 - Ordinances / Administrative Acts
 - Organizational adjustments
- Goal: quick start to change, visible steps

Slide 8 - The role of the media

- Initial situation:
 - Exaggeration, polarization, friend-foe logic
 - "Mandatory optimism" as a possible appeasement
- SIP approach:
 - Media as multipliers of solution knowledge
 - Using international evidence to confront blockades
 - Formats: background pieces, Q&As, interviews, explanatory formats

Slide 9 - Strategic Communication

- Target groups:
 - Politics (government, parliament)
 - Administration
 - Foundations, think tanks, associations
- Channels:
 - Direct distribution of SIPs
 - Classic media (print, online, radio, TV)
 - social media (LinkedIn, Instagram if necessary)
 - Podcasts and live formats
- Goal: Shift in discourse towards solution-oriented, comparative democracy

Slide 10 - Added value for foundations

- SIPs as:
 - o Levers to strengthen democratic problem-solving capacity
 - o Tool for evidence-based program development
 - o Basis for funding strategies at the interfaces of research, politics and the public

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