

The power of comparisons

The GIC as a Hybrid Think Tank

During a time of profound crisis in democratic legitimacy, think tanks must innovate to make our democracies more resilient. The Global Ideas Center organizes itself differently to produce that innovation.

- Think tanks traditionally are organized to produce evidence-based findings that they primarily gear toward decision-makers and professional experts.
- This model is in urgent need of modification, because the public at large is losing trust in the ability of governments and political parties to solve problems. That loss of trust is profound enough to shake the belief in the institutional legitimacy of Western democracies.
- In order to restore this trust, think tanks must respond much more strongly and directly to the legitimate information interests and needs of the broader public.
- To provide a constructive answer to this challenge at the interface of the public sphere and democratic governance, the Global Ideas Center consciously organizes itself as a hybrid think tank.
- Accordingly, the activities of the GIC do have a think tank character – they exercise thought leadership. But they aim less to influence professional audiences and more to provide a service to the public.

Our SIPs are always also communication projects

- In practice, this hybrid approach is particularly evident in the fact that every project the GIC undertakes is designed from the outset as a communications project.
- Part of that design is to always take into account the interests of the media that might distribute and amplify each project's message.
- However, the GIC is not concerned with corresponding to any media outlet's pre-set political orientation or content-related expectations. Doing so all too often limits a message's reach to a particular "bubble." This definitely does not strengthen our democracies.
- Instead, the GIC deliberately relies on the principle of establishing counterpoints to ossified arguments. It strives for originality of analysis and insight to generate lasting attention from the public and the media.

- In order to counteract think tanks'™ tendency to be pigeonholed by policy theme and political orientation, the Global Ideas Center is deliberately organized in a multi-thematic fashion and does not adhere to any political ideology.

Intellectual openness " and virtual travel

- Taken together, these approaches mean the GIC's™ Strategic Intervention Papers may benefit readers by providing a freshness/surprise effect.
- It is also useful that our Strategic Intervention Papers, which by their very structure often involve cross-border comparisons, evoke a sense of virtual exploration or (mind) travel. After all, travel is a state of mind. When undertaking it, people are more receptive to observing and embracing fresh ideas than in their home environments.
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