The rise of majoritarianism

The BTI 2016 confirms a further erosion of democratic quality. This is partly caused by majoritarianism on the rise. There is a growing number of illiberal patterns of governance within formally democratic institutions. Is this a trend or a random grab-bag of parallel developments? Are there different types of majoritarianism? Are they all similarly susceptible to authoritarian mechanisms? And what does a tyranny of the majority mean for democratic development worldwide? These questions will be addressed in the working paper “The rise of majoritarianism” by Peter Thiery (Heidelberg University).

Social justice in emerging economies

Drawing on qualitative expert assessments, we will conduct an exploratory study of social inclusion in African, Asian and Latin American countries that is informed by established theories of social justice. Our objective is to identify, with the help of strengths and weaknesses profiles, the gains made and major challenges in ensuring social inclusion, thereby providing policymakers with evidence-based best practices. The study combines current BTI data with available quantitative data from other sources.

The persistent challenge of fragility and conflict

State fragility can take on a number of forms: a state's insufficient monopoly on the use of force, the failure of basic state services, and deficient state legitimacy. Which forms of structural instability do we currently face? And will declining state authority, capacity and legitimacy be accompanied by increasing conflict intensity? Will this lead to a conflict-ridden power vacuum? As the causes of fragility also vary – from drug mafias to religious extremism –, how might conflict management of political decision-makers adapt to a variety of challenges in order to effectively deescalate and mitigate tensions? These questions will be addressed in the working paper “The persistent challenge of fragility and conflict” by Jörn Grävingholt (German Development Institute) and Sebastian Ziaja (Heidelberg University).