

# **The Concept of Democratic Consolidation**

**A Tool to Aid Actors with Democracy Assistance?**

Bachelor Thesis  
by  
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**Abstract:**

This paper tries to answer the question whether the concept of democratic consolidation can help external actors in the field of democracy assistance in fragile democracies to analyze and modify (or improve) their programs aiming at a consolidation of democracy? Using the concept of consolidation by Wolfgang Merkel as a tool for the analysis, the case of German organizations in Sri Lanka is studied – more precisely the state of consolidation in Sri Lanka, the work of the organizations and how they target at the problems of consolidation. The result is that to a certain degree the concept of consolidation can be a helpful tool for the analysis of the state of democracy in a country, for mapping projects of external actors roughly within the system of democracy and for modifying the programs of the actors.

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## Introduction

Today democracy is the dominating form of government in the world, its rivals have “either disappeared, turned into eccentric survival, or retreated from the field to hunker down in their last strongholds” (Dahl; 1998: 1). Important factors for the spread of democracy were not only the end of communism, which Huntington called the third wave of democratization, but also the second wave which includes the decolonization of many countries in the post-WW2 time. Many of these countries struggled in becoming democracies, some failed, many remained unstable, others became consolidated.

This paper wants to turn the spotlight on the countries which have not yet become consolidated democracies and need efforts to become sustainable democracies. A variety of external actors work to support these countries to become consolidated democracies, they work in the field of *democracy assistance* (Carothers; 1999), which is of special importance in times of international terrorism (Dauderstädt / Lerch; 2005; [www.fes.de](http://www.fes.de)). A field which a lot of research has been done upon is democratic consolidation, which tries to find factors which are crucial for a democracy to become consolidated (cf. Linz; Stepan; 1996 / Diamond; 1999 / O'Donnell; 1996 et al.).

The aim of this paper is to find out how external actors can contribute to democratic consolidation by using a theory or concept of democratic consolidation. The paper applies the concept by Wolfgang Merkel (Merkel; 1996; 1999), since it has many advantages compared to other concepts concerning applicability and coverage (as will be explained later). This paper tries to use the concept as a means of analyzing the work of external actors which are active in the field of democracy assistance. The underlying hypothesis is that the concept of consolidation is a useful tool to analyze (and modify) the work of these organizations. This hypothesis should be tested on the work of German organizations working in the field of democracy assistance in Sri Lanka, a country which has been a democracy for decades, but is generally not regarded as a consolidated democracy.

## Research Question & Methodology

The research question of this paper is: *Can the concept of democratic consolidation help external actors in the field of democracy assistance in fragile democracies to analyze and modify (or improve) their programs to consolidate the democracy?*

It is important to find an answer to this question for several reasons. Several researchers applied various concepts of consolidation with focuses on several countries, one of them is Merkel's and is regarded as useful for an analysis by different authors (cf. Emminghaus; 2003). However, nobody has tested if the concept can provide benefits for external actors in the field of democracy assistance. Concepts or theories try to explain things, but one might ask if they cannot also provide additional practical value. Since the usefulness for external actors has not yet been tested by any researchers and there are no studies upon which this paper could be based, further empirical research is needed.

The paper will try to answer this question in the following way: First, several concepts of consolidation are discussed to show the strengths and weaknesses of different concepts of consolidation. In addition it will be shown why Merkel's concept of consolidation is the most appropriate one for our purposes. A concept of consolidation that will help us in answering the research question has to fulfill specific conditions so that it can be said to be useful. It should contain a set of elements which are needed to call a democracy consolidated, since only with specific criteria, elements or dimensions an analysis can be done, both of the country and of the work of certain organizations. The concept should provide a tool that can analyze as many elements as possible under the aspect of democratic consolidation. Only with a number of elements which are taken into account can we lower the risk of overlooking factors which might be important for the consolidation of the country. The discussion will show why Merkel's concept is the most useful one.

In order to answer the research question empirical research is needed since there no empirical research has been done so far. Merkel's concept has been applied by him to several cases (Merkel; 1999) and also other scientists have dealt with it, but no-one has examined if the concept can actually help external actors in the field of democracy assistance with their practical work.

Second, with the concept of consolidation the state of democracy in a country – in this case Sri Lanka – will be analyzed by using the selected concept of consolidation as a tool. The island state Sri Lanka was chosen because it has been a democracy for many years, but it can be regarded as a fragile democracy. A variety of external organizations – mostly of western origin – conduct democracy assistance there.

After focusing on the state of consolidation of the country, third, the work of some organizations will be analyzed (and mapped) within the concept of consolidation. Since it would be far beyond the scope of the paper to analyze all organizations the analysis will be restricted to German organizations. German

organizations were chosen, since they – especially the German political foundations – belong to the biggest actors in this field with decades of experience. Additionally the author has access to detailed information about the programs since he worked for one of the organizations (the FES) in the frame of an internship in 2006.

In a fourth step the paper will contrast the shortages of de-

mocracy with the projects of the organizations to find out if the concept of consolidation is able to show weak and strong points of the work of the organizations in comparison with the problems of the country and to find out if there are fields – which lack consolidation – and in which the organizations could become active in the future.

#### Steps of Analysis

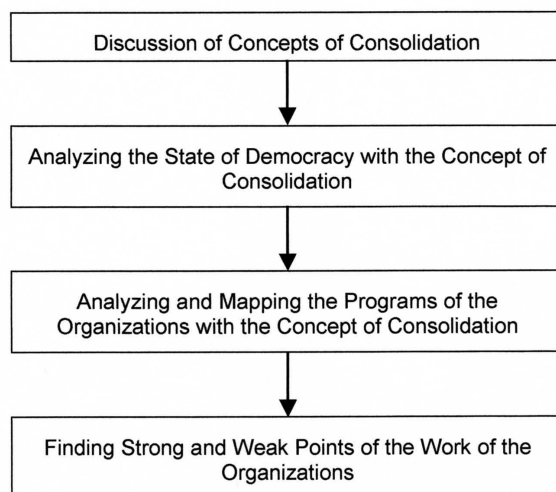


Fig.1: by Claus F. Faulenbach

### Discussion of Different Concepts of Consolidation

Before different concepts of consolidation are discussed, some remarks about the term consolidation should be made here. Basically the process of democratization can be divided into two distinct parts, transition and consolidation, although temporarily the two can overlap or even coincide (Gunther / Puhle /

Diamandouros; 1995: 3). Transition is the process which describes the change from an authoritarian regime – starting with its breakdown – to a functioning democratic regime, so it is the process of a radical change in the form of government. When one regards democratization sequentially consolidation follows or partly overlaps with transition.

Yet, there is no common understanding of consolidation. Originally consolidation was used synonymously with stabilization or sustainability, however the persistence of the young Latin-American democracies in a time of strong backlashes and only limited experience of democracy, changed the understanding. The Latin-American democracies persisted although they were not regarded as consolidated according to many concepts. O'Donnell pointed out that one should not confuse the persistence of a democracy with the consolidation of a democracy (O'Donnell; 1994/1996). In fact, there is no automatic progress towards consolidation, the development can either go backwards to authoritarian governments or forward to democracy. However it might also happen that defective executive-biased democracies become consolidated, so that they neither break down nor develop towards democracy or polyarchy to recall Dahl (Merkel; 1997:19). These democracies contain the democratic minimum of elections, but in-between the elections they suffer from a lack of civil rights and/or rule of law. So, what exactly can be understood under consolidation? The original meaning of stability became more and more blurred and consolidation was also a term which was or is used for deepening or completing democracy. Schedler presents the different notions of democracy in an article in the *Journal of Democracy* under five different headings: Preventing democratic breakdown, preventing democratic erosion, completing democracy, deepening democracy and organizing democracy (Schedler; 1998). Roughly the first two deal with the original meaning of democratic stabilization, the next two deal with progress towards a higher level of democracy<sup>1</sup>, the last one with structural changes without progress or regress (Schedler; 1998). Schedler argues that one should focus on

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<sup>1</sup> They deal with the development towards advanced democracy from lower levels of democracy such as electoral democracy or liberal democracy. Schedler arranges the different notions of democratic consolidation on a four category scheme starting with authoritarian regime over electoral democracy and liberal democracy to advanced democracy. The two categories in the middle are the ones which are in the centre of all consolidation approaches.

the original meaning of consolidation as securing democracy and that the deepening or completion of democracy should be labeled as such and not as consolidation.

The problem is that it is difficult to differentiate between the two. Where does consolidation begin and end and where does deepening start? Are elements of consolidation not at the same time elements of deepening? This problem is probably the main reason for the confusing notions of democracy that one can find in literature and in fact it is really difficult to make a distinction between the things which contribute to securing democracy and the things which contribute to a deepening of democracy.

In general there seems to be a return to the roots of consolidation in the sense of making democracy stable, and this should also be the understanding of this paper, but still one has to keep in mind that democratic consolidation and democratic deepening overlap and are not always easy to distinguish.

Besides the confusion about what consolidation exactly describes, there is furthermore no common understanding about when a democracy can be called consolidated. All in all two main streams have developed: one with minimalist definitions and another one with maximal definitions. Nearly all concepts can be grouped on a line between the extreme positions maximal and minimalist. There is disagreement on which institutions have to reach a consolidated status for the overall system to be consolidated, there is disagreement on the attitudes and behavior of different (key)-actors and on the way of how a state of consolidation can be achieved quickly.

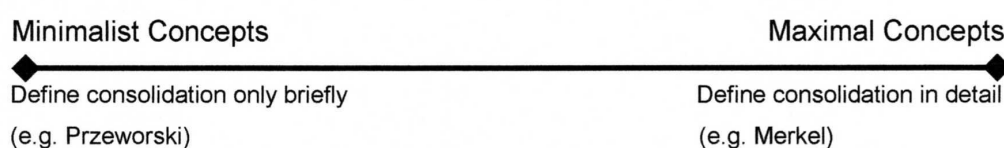


Fig.2: by Claus F. Faulenbach

Since a definition which includes a variety of aspects and more detailed elements for the analysis of one country is needed to answer the research question<sup>2</sup>, some theories will now be discussed briefly. First the focus should lie on

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<sup>2</sup> Some elements are needed since the a general definition is not so helpful for the work of actors in the field of democracy assistance. The aim is to deliver some rather practical results for the work of the organisations and about the usefulness of the concept.



the minimalist theories. In this group the definition by Przeworski is probably the most cited one. He regards democracy as consolidated “when under given political and economic conditions a particular system of institutions becomes the only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions, when all the losers want to do is to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost” (Przeworski; 1991: 26). Przeworski puts special emphasis on the actors and their attitudes and behavior, since they have to accept the legitimacy of the institutions, even in situations which are not in favor of them.

However, this concept can be criticized because it does not take into account the interdependences between the behavior of the actors and the institutions (constitution, governmental system) and the norms. Minimalist definitions like the one of Przeworski have the advantage that they deliver criteria about which there is a consensus that they belong to the basic elements of democracy. Still they are to a high degree vague and do not include many different factors that are important for a democracy, such as institutions in the case of Przeworski.

Other concepts rather narrowly focus on elections and not enough on the time between the elections. From an analytical point of view their usefulness or practicability is restricted, especially when it comes to empirical research and this is what will be done in this paper. Since the minimalist definitions do not seem to be appropriate in this case, because we need specific criteria for when a democracy can be called consolidated, I now would like to turn to other concepts of consolidation which mention a broader set of criteria for analyzing democratic consolidation – the maximal approaches. Scientists with maximal approaches are for instance Huntington<sup>3</sup>, Linz / Stepan, Merkel and Gunther / Diamandourus and Puhle.

Huntington extends the minimalist approaches by adding democratic culture. He regards the process of consolidation as a process which takes a very long time, since the population needs to accept the democratic institutions and internalize the norms (Huntington; 1991). The citizens have to learn democracy. Moreover Huntington mentions a factor which he regards as especially important: the two-

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<sup>3</sup> Huntington’s concept is somehow between the minimalist and the maximal concepts, since he develops his concept starting from a minimalist definition and just adds some elements like the two-turn-over test.

turn-over test, which is nothing else but the double change in government. In his opinion this would show that the elites accept peacefully losing power and that the population would want only a new government but not a new type of regime (Huntington; 1991: 266-267).

When briefly applying the two-turn-over test one realizes for instance that the German democracy would not have been regarded as consolidated up to 1982 and the Japanese one not until 1993 (because there was no double change in government) although both were generally counted as belonging to the group of consolidated democracies. So this test does not really seem to be a good criterion for measuring consolidation. Furthermore Huntington strongly emphasizes the importance of elections and does not focus much on the in-between election time – except for taking into account the political culture. A point that should be mentioned – but not really criticized – is that it is practically difficult to measure political culture. However this is rather a general problem and not a problem typical of Huntington.

Another maximal concept was formulated by Gunther, Diamandourus and Puhle who developed a concept that regards a democratic regime as consolidated “when all politically significant groups regard its key political institutions as the only legitimate framework for political contestation, and adhere to democratic rules of the game.” (Gunther / Diamandourus / Puhle; 1995: 7). This definition includes an attitudinal dimension (political institutions are regarded as acceptable) and a behavioral dimension (a certain set of norms is accepted by all significant groups). A problem is to define what significant groups are, since the ideal type of acceptance by all is non-existent (Gunther / Diamandourus / Puhle; 1995: 7-8). Central in the definition is the term “legitimacy”, because the acknowledgment of the key institutions is crucial for democratic consolidation and the survival of the regime. If the regime does not enjoy a sufficiently broad legitimacy, it can even lead to deconsolidation (cf. Gunther / Diamandourus / Puhle; 1995: 15).

This concept can be criticized because of its focus on political institutions and norms of behavior, since it lacks the inclusion of the civic culture of the masses (Merkel; 1996: 37). Moreover the concept is still vague in many respects. What are significant political groups, who has to acknowledge the key institutions? And what other factors play a role? The concept does not seem to be appropri-

ate to catch up as many fields as possible which are crucial for democratic consolidation and important to analyze the work of external actors in the process of democratic consolidation.

The probably most cited concept of democratic consolidation was framed by Linz and Stepan (Linz / Stepan; 1996), who developed a concept which takes into account different levels of democratic consolidation. Linz and Stepan have an understanding of democratic consolidation which is close to Przeworski, since with consolidation they essentially mean a political situation “in which, in a phrase, democracy becomes ‘the only game in town’ ” (Linz / Stepan; 1996: 5). Strictly speaking they use three dimensions or levels for their analysis. The first is the *behavioral dimension* according to which a democratic regime is consolidated if no significant actors spend significant resources “attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state” (Linz / Stepan 1996: 6). The second is the *attitudinal dimension*, according to which a democracy can be called consolidated if a strong majority of public opinion regards the democratic procedures and institutions as the most appropriate ones to govern society and if the support for anti-system alternatives is small. The third dimension is the *constitutional dimension* which refers to governmental and nongovernmental forces, which have to become habituated to the resolution of conflicts within the democratic procedures and laws (Linz / Stepan 1996: 6).

Consolidation takes place in five arenas: civil society, political society, rule of law, state apparatus and economic society. For all these arenas there are certain needs which have to be fulfilled to call a democracy consolidated (Linz / Stepan; 1996: 7-15). I do not want to go into detail here, because it would go too far. In comparison with the previously discussed concepts this concept is the most encompassing one, since it enables the student of consolidation to analyze a system on three different levels one of which also includes the civic culture (behavioral dimension).

Concerning comprehensiveness Wolfgang Merkel goes one step further (Merkel; 1996, 1999) since he has developed another even more encompassing concept of consolidation which is based on the concept of Stepan and Linz and does not include only three but four different dimensions or levels of analysis, one macro-level, two intermediate levels and one micro-level.

1. *Institutional Consolidation*: Unlike Linz and Stepan Merkel uses this term for the central constitutional and political institutions like the head of state, parliament, government, judiciary and electoral system. With their norms and guidelines these institutions influence the next levels.
2. *Representative Consolidation*: This intermediate level refers to the parties and interest organizations. This level and the first level are decisive for the third level of
3. *Behavioral Consolidation*: powerful actors like the military, enterpriser, radical movements try not to get through their interests outside or against the democratically legitimized institutions and actors. When the first three levels are consolidated they have a decisive/positive impact on the last, the micro level, the
4. *Civic Culture or Political Culture*, which is the basis of democracy. The consolidation of this level can take generations.

Only if the four levels are consolidated, one can speak of a consolidated democracy which is resistant to crises (Merkel; 1996: 38-39; 1999: 145). The levels are temporally or sequentially and hierarchically organized. Merkel assumes that the first level is consolidated first (polity first), and the others follow then. Compared to many minimalist definitions which mostly focus on the first three levels he also focuses on the civic culture and puts special emphasis on the level of representative consolidation.

The first level of *institutional consolidation* especially focuses on the process of constitution making and the constitution itself. Merkel emphasizes the dimensions of the legitimacy of the constitution (formal legitimacy and empirical legitimacy) and the structure of the constitution. To his mind the most important factors for the constitution are political and social inclusion (which means that minorities are not discriminated against on behalf of ethnicity, religion or whatsoever reason) and institutional efficiency (fast decision making and implementation) and political effectiveness (political decisions contribute to a solution of the problems). While the demand for inclusion in the constitution is obvious, the question of efficiency and effectiveness is not so easy to answer, since this question deals with the governmental system.

Merkel does not give a clear answer which system (parliamentarian vs. presidential) has more advantages for the consolidation process, although different authors opt for parliamentary systems (Linz; 1990); he instead emphasizes that the system has to be regarded in its environment taking also into account the second and third levels. Nevertheless he has a clear attitude towards semi-presidential systems as they are especially unfavorable for unconsolidated democracies, since semi-presidential systems can lead to paralysis in times of cohabitation, and in times when president and majority in parliament belong to the same party, the power of the president is even much bigger than in presidential governmental systems, so that important checks and balances are missing (Merkel; 1996: 45-46).

The second level – *of representative consolidation* – refers to parties and interest groups. A party system cannot be seen in an isolated way but with the electoral system, even Merkel has no clear preferences, but regards proportional representation systems as more favorable for a high inclusion whereas majoritarian systems usually lead to clearer majorities (Merkel, 1999: 156-157). The electoral system is also dependent on the political and societal environment. Concerning the party landscape the level of fragmentation, the polarization and the voter volatility are important. According to Merkel a low fragmentation, low polarization and a low voter volatility are favorable for democratic consolidation. Besides parties also interest groups play an important role on the level of representative consolidation. Both, parties and interest groups are important hinges between politics and society. As to Merkel interest groups should be efficient and inclusive.

The third level of consolidation – *behavioral consolidation* – refers to political veto-players like the military, paramilitary groups, strong economic actors or terrorist groups. All these actors might turn against the political system if they are not content with it. A problem might lie in undemocratic military groups which might again activate the army as another potentially anti-democratic actor (Merkel; 1999: 164).

The lowest level, which also takes the longest time for consolidation is the level of the *civic culture*. This civic culture is important for a democracy, it is the basis for it. Merkel mentions the diffuse support (general support) and the specific support (support which is connected with specific political decisions) as criteria

for a consolidated civic culture. Basically they refer to the political culture with the values and norms of the citizens on the one hand and to the civil society with its behavior towards the state on the other hand.

#### Merkel's Levels of Consolidation

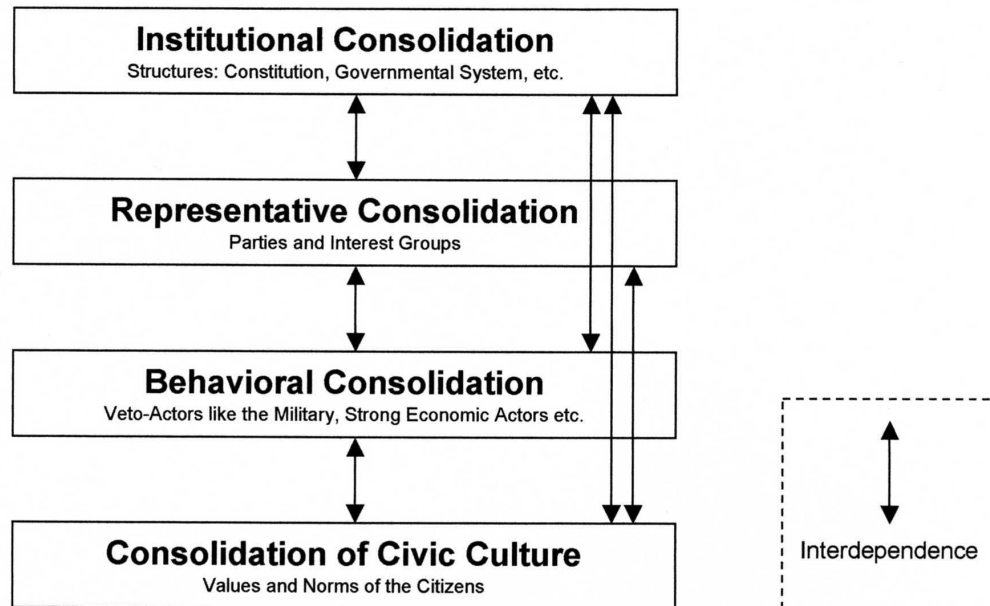


Fig.3: by Claus F. Faulenbach

The concept of Merkel goes far beyond what one might call a liberal democracy (following Dahl), only the first two levels and maybe also to a certain degree the third level might be elements of it but definitely not the fourth level. But needed for the analysis is not a minimum of what is needed for a democracy, but what is needed to make a democracy really stable, which is more than a set of minimal prerequisites. So Merkel's concept seems to be appropriate, since it includes more than these minimal prerequisites.

According to Merkel the strength of the four level concept is that it is more encompassing, since a huge range of factors are included so that the concept does not fail when explaining the failure of different democracies, such as the collapse of the in-between war democracies of Italy, Germany and Austria, where only the first level was consolidated but none of the others, especially not the fourth level.

The advantage of this concept is that the consolidation on different levels can be analyzed separately, so that shortages can be identified. This tool allows us especially to study regimes which are in a process of consolidation, but which

are struggling with several problems. Particularly the possibility to identify weaknesses and deficits in the system which impede further consolidation is a big strength of the system (cf. Emminghaus; 2003; 34). Furthermore Merkel explains – unlike other scientists – the levels in detail and makes clear what the different levels include, how they are interconnected and what the problems for the consolidation of the different levels are.

This paper wants to use this strength of Merkel's concept to analyze the governmental system of Sri Lanka so that the paper then can analyze the state of democracy in Sri Lanka and afterwards analyze the work of the organizations against this background before the results of the two analyses are contrasted.

### **Sri Lanka and Its State of Democracy**

Sri Lanka has been a democracy for decades now and still in the 70s it was regarded as one of the shining examples of a former colony which became a democracy (Sri Lanka was under the control of three colonial powers), but there has been a process of deconsolidation in the country, which was partly caused by the civil war between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). One has to keep in mind that some areas in the north and east are even controlled by the LTTE.

In Sri Lanka the preconditions for a democracy had been better than in many other former colonies, since the way to democracy was rather peaceful and during the colonial time (under the rule of the British colonial power) there had been elections (since 1931). However, due to many reasons Sri Lanka's democracy does not seem to be in a good shape though I do not want to anticipate any results of the following analysis.

#### *Institutional Consolidation*

First, I want to focus on the institutional consolidation, which according to Merkel is the most important level, both temporarily and hierarchically, which nevertheless does not mean that there cannot be any consolidation on the other levels (Merkel; 1996: 41). This level has great importance, since the institutions (especially the constitution) guarantee the procedures of political decision making processes and thus influence the whole political system.

In his concept Merkel puts emphasis on the way of implementation of the first democratic *constitution*. I do not want to focus much on the procedure of the implementation, since the constitution has been changed several times and the implementation has always been done in accordance with the rules. So the formal legitimacy of the constitution cannot be regarded as an obstacle for democratic consolidation. This is however different concerning the empirical legitimacy. The constitution of Sri Lanka has been changed several times, the Soulboury Constitution of 1945 was substituted by a new constitution in 1972, which was changed again 6 years later. With the change of constitutions from a Westminster Model to a semi-presidential system of government also minority rights were abolished which were existent in the Soulboury constitution (under Article 29) and additionally Buddhism was introduced as state religion. The Sinhalese majority of Sri Lankans – around 74% of the whole population – are Buddhists, but most of the Tamils are Hindus and moreover there are also Muslims and Christians. According to Merkel (Merkel; 1996: 44) political inclusion is important for the legitimacy, so there are problems concerning the legitimacy especially among the Tamils (Sarvesmaran; Interview; 2006).

Moreover Merkel regards institutional efficiency (in form of fast political decision making) and political effectiveness (in form of decisions which solve the problems of the country) – as important for the empirical legitimacy. The design of the Sri Lankan constitution – which has many similarities with the French semi-presidential system – puts strong power in the post of the executive president. He or she can declare war, carries out actions decided by the legislative branch (the unicameral parliament) or the supreme court. But besides formal the president also has informal powers due to his or her status as the highest elected official of his or her party, which allows him or her to control his or her own party in parliament. The president is responsible to the parliament which can impeach him or her if the supreme court approves it. On the other hand the president can appoint and remove members of the supreme court, so he or she has strong influence on it. Basically there is a high concentration of power in the post of the president and thus the parliament “may be reduced to little more than a rubber stamp, if the president is in a position to control both the cabinet (with the prime minister that he appoints) and the party” (Baxtor; Malik; Kennedy; Oberst; 2002: 341). This system makes the abuse of power by the president more likely.



Although Merkel makes no explicit statement about parliamentary or presidential systems he states that semi-presidential systems (like in Sri Lanka) are especially unfavorable for unconsolidated democracies (Merkel; 1996: 45) as was already mentioned above. Semi-presidential systems can be paralyzed in times of cohabitation or lack checks and balances if president and majority in parliament belong to the same party, so that the power of the president increases tremendously (Merkel; 1996: 45-46). The following may serve as an example of the extreme power of the president and the abuse of it: After a change of the constitution – the so-called 17<sup>th</sup> amendment – which was meant to restrict the power of the president and other authorities (a bit) – the president had to appoint some members for the newly established commissions, but he simply did not do it. The big power which the president has, opens the door to a policy of the president which sometimes makes him (or her) able “to violate rules without serious consequences” (Weliamuna; Interview; 2006), especially when the system of checks and balances does not work well<sup>4</sup>, as it is the case at the moment.

For several reasons – among them the power of the president – the governmental system does not always provide efficient and effective solutions. Of course effectiveness and efficiency are difficult to measure. From the point of political effectiveness and institutional efficiency it is also hardly explainable why there are altogether more than 60 ministries in Sri Lanka, nine of which are responsible for agriculture, one only for the three botanical gardens of the country. The high number of ministries has to do with “nepotism and corruption and nearly every ministry includes a field of responsibility where revenues can be earned” (Weliamuna; Interview; 2006).

The electoral system belongs also to the level of institutional consolidation (Merkel; 1996: 38). Depending on the country there are different consolidation supporting electoral systems with barring clauses or compensational systems which combine elements of proportional representation systems and majority voting systems (Merkel; 1996: 47). The Sri Lankan system is a proportional representation system in which the majority of the MPs are elected in multi-seat constituencies, whereas a small share (29 out of 225) is elected on the basis of

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<sup>4</sup> The head of the Supreme Court refused to take measure against President Rajapaksa although he openly violated different laws (Weliamuna; Interview; 2006).

national lists. From the aspect of institutional engineering that helps to consolidate the democracy, since it gives minorities – and there are several in Sri Lanka – the chance to be represented in parliament. The judiciary should just be briefly mentioned, which works comparatively well in Sri Lanka with the exception of the highest court.

Altogether the level of constitutional consolidation shows both, signs of consolidation and of non-consolidation. Problems lie especially in the lack of efficiency and effectiveness, the lack of the division of powers (so the design of the governmental system as a semi-presidential one) and the lack of inclusiveness (of the constitution).

### *Representative Consolidation*

The level of representative consolidation can roughly be divided into two groups of organizations: parties and interest organizations.

Of course the *parties* cannot be regarded in an isolated way, since the electoral system strongly influences the party system. Perhaps due to the electoral system the party landscape of Sri Lanka is not very fragmented, which is again a positive aspect (Merkel; 1996: 48). A problem is the high polarization of the party system. The JVP – a radical Marxist party – was for instance involved in several uprisings, and still has extreme positions concerning the solution of the ethnic conflict and the economy (Becker; 2004; [www.fes.de](http://www.fes.de)); the JHU, the party of Buddhist monks is also known for its extreme positions. An additional problem is that several parties in Sri Lanka are organized along ethnic lines, which also does not contribute to consolidation according to Merkel's concept. The Sri Lankan party system has undergone many changes in the past decades having led to a high voter volatility, which "could pose a serious threat to the political system" (Baxtor; Malik; Kennedy; Oberst; 2002: 361) and is also – according to Merkel – a sign of non-consolidation.

Not only parties, but also *interest groups* play a crucial role since they represent the society in different respects and especially in opposition to the state. In many post-authoritarian countries the civil society is underdeveloped (Merkel; 1996: 49). Although Sri Lanka has many preconditions (such as democracy, freedom of speech, educated citizens) which support the development of a political civil society there is still not a strong tradition of an independent civil soci-

ety or of peaceful mass political mobilization by civil society groups. This does not mean that there are no groups which are politically active, there is “a broad range of NGOs working toward social and peace policies” and in contrast to the “fragmented and weak labor unions” (Mohamed; Interview; 2006 / cf. Velayudam; Interview; 2006) business organizations are relatively effective (Bertelsmann Transformation Index; [www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.com](http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.com)). But these groups do not have a strong impact on the society and on the political system in Sri Lanka. They are often intellectuals, critical journalists, or people who are just involved somehow, but they do not have a strong voice in the country. So, in general, interest groups in Sri Lanka are weak and unorganized (Baxtor; Malik; Kennedy; Oberst; 2002: 363).

A problem which additionally occurs in the field of interest groups and civil society is the fact that the civil society is “almost entirely segmented along ethnic lines” (Timberman; Bevis; 2001: 12; [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)). So it is not inclusive as it would be desirable for the consolidation of the country (Merkel; 1996: 50). Taking into account the fact that Sri Lanka has been an independent democracy for more than five decades, the situation of interest groups is interesting. In general Merkel expects an increase of the strength and importance of the interest groups with the progress of consolidation.

Summarizing one can say that the level of representative consolidation is rather not consolidated, since groups of representative interests are rather weak or organized along ethnic lines or even radical.

What is now exactly the impact of the first two levels on the third and the forth level? This is an interesting question, since the existence of structures is not the same as the institutionalization of them, as they need to have an impact on the acting of the elites and the broad population (Merkel; 1996: 51). To have this impact not solely the institutional arrangements are crucial but it is also decisive how different actors act within the given frames and arrangements.

The stability of the political system is highly dependent on its legitimacy in the eyes of the political and societal elites and key actors. Without this legitimacy the political system is highly in danger, which underlines the importance of seeing polity and politics as two interacting levels. The structure is nothing if the

actors do not act responsibly and in accordance with the laws, so they have to accept the legitimacy.

Legitimacy is a term used by different authors who study democratic consolidation. Merkel understands legitimacy as the belief that an ensemble of political institutions and procedures is better than any other alternative (Merkel; 1996: 52). This is a relative definition (the system is better than any other system) and not a normative-absolute one.

### *Behavioral Consolidation*

Behavioral consolidation refers to key actors like the military, enterpriser, radical movements which should not try to get through their interests outside or against the democratically legitimized actors. In Sri Lanka there is the special case of the LTTE<sup>5</sup> (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) which is an organization seeking to establish an independent state in the north and the east of the country. The LTTE does not try to achieve this aim within the democratic system in Sri Lanka, but outside. The LTTE is involved in war-like fights in the north and east against the elected government (which is fighting against the LTTE with military means) and also uses car bombs etc. to kill people who are fighting against it or are not in line with its policy. So the LTTE acts outside of the democratic institutions and one could also say against them<sup>6</sup>. The LTTE is clearly a radical movement, which acts outside of the democratic system. A problem which arises from the conflict between the LTTE on the one hand and the government with the armed forces on the other hand is that this conflict might also lead to non-democratic tendencies in the armed forces. Thus there is a threat from the LTTE and potentially – according to Merkel's concept – also from the Sri Lankan armed forces.

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<sup>5</sup> The LTTE controls big areas in the north and the east of Sri Lanka. However, although the LTTE is on the EU and on the USA "terror list" – and thus regarded as a terrorist organisation – it is more than that. Besides running its own army it runs a public administrative system in the controlled area, so that these areas can be regarded as a state in the state. The LTTE regards itself as the only legitimate representative of all Tamils in Sri Lanka and therefore tries to kill Tamils who do not accept this position.

<sup>6</sup> In the LTTE controlled area there are no elements of democracy. Nationwide elections do not take place there and the leaders of the LTTE are not elected.

Another serious danger in form of an actor who might turn against the democratic system is the already mentioned JVP, which however has not been involved in any uprising in the last years, but still is a potential threat.

So the present political system does not enjoy the (full) legitimacy of all veto players. This is why this level is not consolidated.

### *Civic Culture*

According to Merkel the civic culture is the basis of a democracy and the consolidation of it can take generations (Merkel; 1996: 39), since the values and norms of democracy have to be internalized first.

There are two different kinds of support for the democracy: specific support and diffuse support. *Specific support* refers to the action of political decision makers and the ensuing performance or output. But much more fundamental and deeply rooted is the *diffuse support*, which is not output orientated like the specific support but more a general support which is independent of specific political decisions which are not welcomed by the citizens. So the “diffuse support is support that underlies the regime as a whole and the political community” (Easton; 1997: 445).

Unfortunately there are no data available concerning the specific support, but this is not really surprising since the specific support depends on the output of politics in concrete cases or a short period of time. For the analysis the diffuse support for democracy is more interesting. An NGO called Academy for Educational Development (AED) conducted a survey on the peace process in Sri Lanka and in this context it gathered data about the attitudes of the population towards democracy in 2003-2004 (AED; [www.aed.org](http://www.aed.org)). According to this survey the support for the Sri Lankan democracy is “mile wide but inch deep” (AED: 21). Virtually all Sri Lankans support the idea of democracy in the abstract, but a majority also states that the country would be governed better “by a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections (52%)” (AED: 21; [www.aed.org](http://www.aed.org)). Moreover more than 90% would prefer to have experts instead of politicians who govern the country (AED: 21; [www.aed.org](http://www.aed.org)).

Also the former head of the Colombo office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) – the second biggest German political foundation – Carola Stein states that many Sri Lankans do not support democracy (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de))

and many people are discontent with politics and politicians and do not distinguish between the political system (democracy) and the actual action of the politicians (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)). So due to the (continuous) lack of specific support also the diffuse support seems to be very low.

In general the political culture and the support for democracy are quite often mentioned as the crucial problems of the Sri Lankan Democracy (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de) / Sarvesmann; Interview; 2006 / Mohamed; Interview; 2006).

“Die Gesellschaft in Sri Lanka ist bis heute sehr stark in feudalistischen Denkstrukturen verhaftet. Dieses Denkmuster wird auch auf die Politik und auf die Politiker übertragen“ (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)). Democracy and politics are still dominated by clientilism like hundreds of years ago, so the relation between the citizens and politicians is often reduced to a give and take. The citizens support the politicians and get something else back in return. Some members of parliament rule in their constituencies even like feudalistic rulers (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)). In the “Final Report on Abuse of Public Resources During the Presidential Election - 2005 “ of Transparency International the NGO states that “politicians and state officials appointed to high posts in state institutions on political grounds, continue to treat state resources as if they owned them.” (Transparency International Sri Lanka; 2005).

Besides this problem which falls in the field of corruption, Sri Lanka has a general corruption problem which is visible in the Transparency Corruption Perception Index where Sri Lanka can be found in place 78 with a score of 3,2 on a scale from 0 to 10 (10 meaning clean) (Transparency Corruption Perception Index; 2005). The problem of corruption is of course not only an economic problem but also a problem of democratic consolidation (Johnsten; 2000) and the political culture. Also family connections – especially in politics – play an important role. For more than five decades for instance the Bandaranaike family has played a role in the country having had family members many times in different high positions.

According to Carola Stein a serious problem is the lack of knowledge among Sri Lankans about the political system, about democracy and about the role that a responsible civil society can play in a democracy. This lack of knowledge and the weakness of the civil society make corruption and the abuse of power pos-

sible, since an effective control of politicians does not exist. (Stein; 2004; [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)).

So all in all no civic culture which might form the basis for a democracy has grown yet in Sri Lanka, thus also this level is far from being consolidated.

Summarizing it becomes clear in this analysis that the Sri Lankan democracy is not consolidated on any of the four levels of analysis according to Merkel's concept. The constitutional level is probably the level which is closest to consolidation, but some elements in the institutional design do not contribute to consolidation as for instance the lack of inclusion in the constitution which does not guarantee minority rights and mentions Buddhism as state religion. Furthermore the semi-presidential system is according to Merkel not something positive for consolidation. The level of representative consolidation shows serious difficulties in becoming consolidated. The political party system is highly polarized and interest groups are rather weak, so there is still a long way to go until Sri Lanka can be called consolidated. The third level – behavioral consolidation – is clearly not consolidated. Different actors above all the LTTE try to get through their interests outside of the political system or even against it (against democratically elected politicians). Finally – on the level of the civic culture – there is no consolidation either. Non-democratic behaviors and attitudes (such as corruption, abuse of power or clientilism), but also the lack of diffuse support for the democratic system still show that the level of the civic culture has not at all been consolidated despite five decades of democracy.

All in all the Sri Lankan democracy is far from being consolidated: except for the first level, all levels have serious problems to become consolidated. After analyzing the state of consolidation the paper now will turn to the organizations which conduct democracy assistance in Sri Lanka.

### **The Work of External Actors in Sri Lanka**

There are several external actors in Sri Lanka trying to help the country to consolidate its democracy, mostly from Western Europe and North America. This help is called democracy assistance. One of the countries which has been active in the field of democracy assistance since the 50s and has developed a specific approach is Germany. Nearly all democracy assistance by Germany is

not done by state or close to state institutions but by political foundations<sup>7</sup>. The German political foundations can be regarded as the earliest effort of explicitly created institutions for democracy assistance. (Diamond; 1995). The foundations are active worldwide and as the biggest of the foundations the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) runs programs in more than 100 countries. “In fact, until the early 1990s the combined annual spending of the four foundations on assisting democratic associations, trade unions, media, and political institutions abroad equaled or exceeded that of all U.S. publicly funded institutions.” (Diamond; 1995). For a long time the foundations were the only German actors in the field of democracy assistance, nevertheless a few years ago the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) – which is the operative arm of the German governmental technical development assistance – also became active in this field, at least to a small degree. Many projects include “not explicitly but implicitly” elements belonging to the field of democracy assistance (Wasmuth; Interview; 2006).

In Sri Lanka the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) – the foundation which is close to the Social Democratic Party (SPD) – and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNSt), which is close to the Liberal Party (FDP), are active. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) closed its office in 2006 because it wanted to focus on other countries. Besides FES and FNSt the GTZ runs some programs which can be regarded as contributing to democratic consolidation.

On their web pages FES, FNSt and GTZ mention democracy assistance as working field and emphasize the stabilization of fragile societal and state/governmental structures (FES; [www.fes.de](http://www.fes.de) / FNSt; [www.fnst.de](http://www.fnst.de) / GTZ; [www.gtz.de](http://www.gtz.de) 1).

Now the different programs and projects of the organizations mentioned will be analyzed by using Merkel’s concept of democratic consolidation. So after having analyzed the state of democracy in Sri Lanka the same concept of Merkel will be applied to the work of the organizations. This is of course not as easy as analyzing the state of consolidation, since the concept was not really meant for

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<sup>7</sup> Each of the German parties which is in the national parliament has the right to establish its own foundation, which is funded according to the votes the party received in the last elections by the federal and also by the state (Länder) governments.



it. Thus this paper tries to assign the projects according to their (assumed) target-level. This sounds quite general, but in fact it is not so difficult since for most of the projects and programs the target level and area is relatively obvious. Since Merkel has developed a detailed concept of consolidation which includes many different elements and signs of consolidation the projects can be seen in this scheme. Projects which educate ordinary citizens in democracy can be clearly assigned as targeting on the level of civic culture etc. or projects which try to strengthen labor unions have to be regarded as targeting on the consolidation of the level of representative consolidation – more exactly as trying to develop stronger interest groups. So only in very few cases there might be doubts concerning the assigned level.

Concerning the intensity or impact of the projects there are more difficulties, since the impact can hardly be measured. So how can the paper find out if the projects are targeting the problem not only for the focus area – the level of consolidation – but also concerning intensity. The projects, of course, have different impacts and are also very different in scope and means, some give advice, others focus on educating groups of people. So it is basically impossible to measure the impacts and difficult to differentiate between the projects. Thus it will be difficult to say where the organizations work most intensively or with the most impact or success.

Since there is no comparability of the projects this paper will confine itself to describing the projects and counting only the number of projects on the levels without any differentiation, which can at least give a certain indication of the emphasis of the different organizations, although size and impact cannot be taken into account.

### *Institutional Consolidation*

The level of institutional consolidation is – and that is not surprising – an array which belongs to the inner sphere of state sovereignty, which makes it difficult for external actors to be active there, since interference in this sphere is usually not tolerated. Furthermore there is the question how external actors might help to consolidate a country on this level.

Of the three actors mentioned only the FNSt works somehow actively with its programs on “policy consultancy” on this level (Delgoda; Interview; 2006). To-

gether with partners the FNSt tries to give advice and expertise to political actors in Sri Lanka and tries to support policy processes. Of course this sounds rather general, two main elements shall be mentioned here to illustrate this.

The Sri Lankan elections of the national unicameral parliament are held under a modified proportional representative system, which on the one hand (theoretically<sup>8</sup>) leads to a good and fair representation (with a high level of inclusion) of the different parties in parliament, but on the other hand does not provide an even cross-country coverage of members of parliament who represent their local constituencies, so “the members of parliament are not close enough to the basis” (Delgoda; Interview; 2006). Thus the FNSt consultants have developed a proposal for a new electoral system, which has many similarities with the German electoral system in which the share of the parties is determined by the votes, but which also makes it possible to elect local candidates as MPs in their small local one seat constituencies, so that there is one MP responsible for a small constituency and not many MPs for a big constituency, thus “the connection between the citizens and the politician would become closer” (Delgoda; Interview; 2006). The proposal for a reform has not yet been implemented, since the JVP rejected it, but there is still a chance that “it becomes a law if there is a change in government”. (Delgoda; Interview; 2006).

Other efforts of the FNSt focused on developing the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Sri Lankan constitution which aimed at restricting the powers of the president by the introduction of different councils and commissions which had to supervise the president. Although it came into force, the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment has partly been ignored by the president so far, since he did not appoint members that should be appointed.

Summarizing there is only the FNSt focusing on this level, but with changing objectives as the organization tries with its partners to influence or start different reform processes.

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<sup>8</sup> It leads only theoretically to inclusion, because practically many Tamils boycott the elections because of political reasons (independence for Tamil areas).

### *Representative Consolidation*

Representative consolidation is a level on which it is much easier to take action than on the level of constitutional consolidation since the external actors are not in danger of interfering in the sovereignty of the other state.

None of the German organizations works in the party landscape, although the FES is preparing scientific studies at the moment, which might be a starting point for projects in this field. However no decision about projects has been made yet.

Besides parties also interest organizations belong to the level of representative consolidation and the two foundations – FES and FNSt work in this field. As the FES is the foundation of the social democratic party, which traditionally has (had) close ties with labor unions, the FES in Sri Lanka also puts special and intensive emphasis on the labor unions in various respects. Foremost the FES tries to increase the skills and knowledge in the labor unions via civic education programs. The topics of the programs or projects vary. Some workshops focus on the education of ILO (International Labor Organization) standards, since these norms become more important in the process of globalization, other workshops focus on strategy development, i.e. on how to present issues in the public or how to recruit new members. Besides this transfer of knowledge the FES also tries to tackle the structural problems of the Sri Lankan labor unions – they are highly fragmented and often small – by bringing them together to agree on the terms of conduct in the negotiations with the employers.

The FNSt – as the foundation of the liberal party – works together with business organizations in Sri Lanka like the chamber of commerce to strengthen their weight in the political system and to make them work more effectively. So the FNSt like the FES also works with organizations of representative interest.

### *Behavioral Consolidation*

Concerning the third level of consolidation it is difficult to assign projects or programs to it. What can an actor do to decrease the likeliness that anti-system actors appear? Probably hardly anything directly – at least we cannot assign any project directly to this level. However, the key to reduce the likeliness that anti system-actors appear might lie on other levels of the consolidation concept of Merkel, such as the political culture, since the different levels of consolidation

are interdependent and according to Merkel the level of civic culture has influence on the other levels which are hierarchically above it.

### *Civic Culture*

The civic culture is a very broad and also a bit vague concept, that is why many projects – in fact the vast majority (12) – can be regarded as trying to help to develop a political culture or civic culture. The support of the society for democracy is influenced by many factors, such as the knowledge about and understanding of democracy, by personal experiences, by the other levels of consolidation etc. The following paragraphs will show the variety of projects that can be labeled as aiming at improving the civic culture or diffuse support for democracy.

The FES runs various projects which deal with extending the support for democracy by extending the knowledge of the population about democracy. This is done by different means, foremost by workshops and the main target groups are young people, women and people in the Tsunami affected areas.

One of the biggest projects of the FES is the Youth Forum, which focuses on young people in the Uva province in the mountain areas, an area which is dominated by agriculture especially by tea plantations. The program consists of two project groups – one in Tamil language and one in Sinhalese – and both groups are run by two different partner organizations of the FES<sup>9</sup>.

The program contains 16 training sessions within one year for 60 people under 25 who were selected in a kind of assessment center. In the 2-3 day long workshops the young women and men shall be given the tools to become 'organic leaders' in their local communities. The seminars focus on different topics such as the post-colonial Sri Lankan State and the legitimization crisis, models of democracy, human rights, nationalism, ethnic conflict and the right of self-determination, civil society and social movement in the postcolonial context, non-violent conflict transformation, gender and feminism, thus covering many different issues. Also economics, international organizations and local topics are dealt with and lessons on communication skills are given. The idea is that the participants spread the knowledge about the political system actively in their

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<sup>9</sup> The FES usually conducts projects together with local partners who have more knowledge about the local situation.

villages among the other villagers. An evaluation with structured interviews showed that many of the participants did so and could start discussions in their villages. Attitudes towards democracy and towards other ethnic groups also seem to have changed positively during the workshops (cf. Faulenbach, 2007: 50-54). So the program can be assigned to the aim of developing a democratic political culture.

Besides the Youth Forum there are also projects in the Tsunami affected Matara and Hambantota districts in the Southern Province, which are just copies of the Youth Forum program, but have a special focus on women. Another quite similar project – *Empowerment of social mobilisers in community development* – has been set up in Badulla. So basically the FES organizes and finances several projects which are aiming at raising awareness about the possibilities that normal citizens have in a democracy. The projects try to change rather passive people into active and critical citizens.

Moreover the FES organizes discussions on economic and social problems, such as in Nuwara Eliya, where different stakeholders of different ethnic backgrounds meet to discuss problems of general nature and problems which affect their lives. Finally in cooperation with Transparency International Sri Lanka the FES organizes the annual national event on the fight against corruption, which consists of a forum for discussions with experts and of a march or demonstration through Colombo, which receives a certain publicity.

The FES also conducts many other projects which focus on youth issues (with a Youth Radio in the Uva Province) or on women (with gender workshops in Nuwara Eliya). So there are many projects of the FES which focus on developing a civic culture in Sri Lanka and the focus seems to be especially on young people.

Not only the FES but also the FNSt puts special emphasis on the education of young people. With partners the liberal foundation FNSt has established political youth organizations which are called Liberal Youth Guilds (LYGs). Altogether 15 of these guilds were founded and 8 are still active with 750 members. In these guilds the young people can discuss political and societal issues and become active independently. However they do not get any financial support from the FNSt, but only advice and the chance to publish articles in a semi-annually published newspaper. The aim is to make the young people think about

politics and about what they can do. Mrs Delgoda – the Country Representative of the FNSt – points out that three members of the LYGs have already become active in politics by running in the Kotte area (south-east of Colombo) on the UNP (United National Party) list for the Municipal Council and were also elected to it (Delgoda, Interview; 2006).

Another project which can be regarded as trying to create a civic culture is called “Gainful Employment” and aims at encouraging “the Youth to be free as they are able to, in order to be responsible, civic conscious citizens who will become worthy partners of a thriving liberal democracy” (FNSt, Presentation). The program tries to show what skills are needed for the young people to get a job and at the same time it transports civic values to them. According to Mrs Delgoda the main purpose of the program is to “inform the people and give them the knowledge to become critical voters” (Delgoda; Interview; 2006). So far eight schools participate in this program with a one day training every second week.

Apart from the youths projects the FNSt also runs elite education programs in different facilities, such as the ‘Internationale Akademie für Führungskräfte’ (IAF) in Germany, where nine people – foremost scientists, politicians or members of partner organizations – are sent each year. Altogether 20-24 people can also be sent to workshops and seminars of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) and of the Liberal Youth of South Asia (LYSA). The workshops deal with different issues in the field of politics and governance.

So all in all the number of participants is rather low and the focus does not lie on education for a wide group of people, but on decision makers or multipliers, that is people who have influence on other people or people who are in leading positions in politics, economy or society. These programs try to contribute to the development of a civic culture, so to the consolidation of the fourth level.

Originally the GTZ was not active in the field of democracy assistance or civic education, however some of the projects of the GTZ are at least to a certain degree aiming at developing a political or civic culture.

FLICT (Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation) is a project which is jointly financed by different countries (Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, Australia) but is implemented by the GTZ. The aim of the project is to

support initiatives and projects which help in the process of conflict transformation and secure a lasting peace, so that the “recognition of democratic and pluralistic values” is fostered ([www.gtz.de](http://www.gtz.de)). The project has three main objectives: (a) Transforming cultural identities towards an inclusive society, (b) inter-ethnic and inter-religious linkages for conflict transformation and (c) civic participation for democratic and plural forms of governance. FLICT supports different small organizations or initiatives by various means which range from professional advice, capacity building and training up to financial subsidies.

Another project is the Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Conflict Transformation which is financed jointly by the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ), the German Foreign Office (AA) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) through the GTZ. This project which is implemented by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies supports ministries, scientists, civil society actors and national and international development organizations in the process of conflict transformation in their field of work (Zunzer; 2002, [www.berghof-center.org](http://www.berghof-center.org)) The main focus lies on the re-training of multipliers (people who are in a position to spread knowledge, so people from parties, administrations and developing organizations) in the fields of conflict analysis, negotiation skills etc.. Another focus lies on the dialogue and cooperation between the different professional groups within the two ethnic communities, which means (1) the translation of study material in Tamil and Sinhalese and (2) the organization of seminars and workshops on conflict transformation.

Both projects mentioned can be considered as aiming at developing a peaceful political culture. The focus is mostly on conflict transformation and reconciliation, but both contribute to a political culture, which is sustentative to democracy.

## Overview of the Programs of the Organizations

No.	Organization	Project / Program
<b>Institutional Consolidation</b>		
1	FNSI	Policy consultancy in different fields especially concerning institutional reforms
<b>Representative Consolidation</b>		
1	FES	Training for trade unionists on globalization and ILO-Norms (In Tamil and Sinhalese)
2	FES	Training for trade unionists in the Plantation Sector
3	FES	Leadership training for trade unionists
4	FES	Publication of information and training material on various topics
5	FES	Training-sessions on various topics with seven different labor unions
6	FNSI	Working together with business organizations
<b>Behavioral Consolidation</b>		
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<b>Civic Culture</b>		
1	FES	Young Leaders / Youth Forum Badulla and Moneragala
2	FES	Civic education in the tsunami area for young persons and women in Matara and Hambantota
3	FES	Youth radio in the Uva Province
4	FES	Discussions with different stakeholders in Nuwara Eliya
5	FES	National event against corruption in cooperation with Transparency International
6	FNSI	Liberal Youth Guilds (political youth organizations)
7	FNSI	Gainful Employment (practical and civic education)
8	FNSI	Elite education in the Internationale Akademie für Führungskräfte
9	FNSI	Elite Education in the frame of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD)
10	FNSI	Elite Education in the frame of the Liberal Youth of South Asia (LYSA)
11	GTZ	FLICT (Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation)
12	GTZ	Resource Network for Conflict Studies

Fig.4: by Claus F. Faulenbach

## The Work of the Actors Against the Background of the State of Consolidation

After analyzing the state of democracy of Sri Lanka with Merkel's concept and after assigning the projects of the organization to the levels of his concept, the two will be contrasted.

The problem in a comparison is that there can hardly be found a good basis of comparison. How should one compare problems and projects of different nature? This paper tries to solve this problem by showing the state of consolidation as opposed to the work of the organization in a qualitative way. Due to our analysis we know the state of consolidation of the Sri Lankan democracy and we also know on which levels the organizations work. The paper wants to



merge the two by looking at the work of the organization against the background of the problems. For instance we know what the problems on the second level of consolidation (the representative consolidation) are, so we can look if the programs try to tackle these problems with their projects. Of course we cannot make any statement on the efficiency of the projects, but we can see if the projects target at the problems and this is what the paper will do in the next part.

For the *level of institutional consolidation* our analysis has already shown that all constitutional, governmental and structural aspects concerning the political system are in the inner sphere of state sovereignty and thus hardly in the focus of external actors of democracy assistance. However this level of consolidation is of extreme importance since it has a strong impact down on the other levels. Although our analysis has revealed certain shortages on this level, such as the lack of inclusion in the constitution or the lack of political effectiveness and institutional efficiency, the organizations analyzed have hardly any possibility to influence the change of the governmental system of Sri Lanka. Only the FNSt runs some projects which aim at structural reforms. This is done by consultancy and lobbying for different changes in the system such as the reform of the electoral system, however the consultancy seems to have had little success so far. So the three German organizations can only carefully work on this level of consolidation and they only do it with limited intensity. If there is leeway for the work the organizations could intensify their work with policy consultancy or lobbying for institutional changes, but the chances of success are probably rather low due to the unwillingness for structural changes in the governing elites.

In Sri Lanka the *level of representative consolidation* is less consolidated than the level of constitutional consolidation, since the party landscape is highly polarized and since interest groups and civil society organizations are rather weak or organized along ethnic lines – which means that they are also polarized. Both factors – high polarization of the party landscape and the weakness of interest groups – are according to Merkel's concept signs that this level is not consolidated.

Of the three organizations the two political foundation FES and FNSt are active in this field. The FES supports Sri Lankan labor unions in various ways with seminars to transfer knowledge and with meetings to make the labor unions work together so that they have greater influence. A big share of all projects of the FES in Sri Lanka is in fact focused on labor unions as can be seen on the table on page 29. Although the business organizations seem to be – at least in comparative terms – relatively strong the FNSt works on strengthening them, so altogether both – the organizations of employed persons and employers – are targets of the work of the German organizations.

There are of course many other types of organizations than labor unions and business organizations, mostly partners of the organizations (civic education organizations, think tanks etc.) are supported, which work on the same aims.

None of the three organizations has a focus on parties – only the FES is thinking about starting projects in this field, but has not yet done that. The reason why none of the organizations works intensively with parties, might lie in the fact, that this kind of work would also mean the direct involvement in politics, which might cause problems for the organization. In general it seems to be difficult to find partners, organizations which are not partisan or biased, so that the organizations might decide not to become active.

Looking at the three organizations against the background of the problems, there are still different fields of representative interest where the organizations might intensify their work, especially on interest groups different from labor unions or business associations and on parties. Thus they could contribute to the process of consolidation.

The *level of behavioral consolidation* is defined very narrowly by Merkel, since he restricts it to anti-system actors. These actors exist in Sri Lanka in an extreme way in form of the LTTE, which is in a war-like situation with the Sri Lankan government. But the fight against the development of anti-system actors or rather the avoidance of this development lies hardly in the field of democracy assistance, thus none of the three organizations is active in this field. Nevertheless, other levels of consolidation have or might have an impact on this level, so that the work of the organizations on other levels might have positive effects

on this level as well – especially when they target at improving the inter-ethnic understanding

Finally there is the *level of the political or civic culture*, which cannot be called consolidated as our analysis has shown. The diffuse support for democracy is low, the knowledge about democracy is low, forms of clientilism are not the exception in the country and corruption and the misuse of power are serious problems in politics and everyday life. This level can hardly be called consolidated pursuant to Merkel's concept, the way to consolidation seems to be very long.

All three organizations are active to help consolidate the fourth level of Merkel's concept. The diversity of programs and projects of the three organizations is tremendous. The main focus of the three organizations seems to lie on young people and people who are in key positions in the sense that their position offers them the possibility to spread the knowledge to other people. The majority of the projects consist of workshops, of knowledge transfer and education on how democracy works and how people can become active themselves. The FES runs programs with young people in different regions where they get information on democracy, politics, economics and learn to discuss with other people, so that they can spread the knowledge. Other projects try to bring people together to discuss their problems. The FNSSt also tries to educate young people to become responsible for themselves such as in Youth Guilds. Additionally it offers civic education possibilities for a small number of decision makers, who have impact on the institutions or administrations they work for. And with FLICT the GTZ runs a well-financed program which organizes workshops and supports for other projects and groups in various ways.

All these programs can be assigned as trying to develop a civic, a political culture. All organizations, FES, FNSSt and GTZ seem to have their main emphasis on this level of consolidation which is the lowest level and the one which needs usually the longest time for consolidation. By spreading and raising awareness the projects try to root the democratic values deeper in society. This is basically grass root work and the approaches of the organizations are mostly civic education programs. The work of the organizations seems to be well adapted to the problems of consolidation on this level. The work – the projects – try to in-

crease the knowledge about and acceptance of democracy – what above was called diffuse support for democracy. Having in mind the analysis the programs cannot really be criticized concerning their target, but we of course cannot make any statement about the effectiveness or the contents of the programs in detail.

**Problems of Consolidation and Number of Programs on each Level**

Level of Consolidation	State of Consolidation	Number of Projects
Institutional Consolidation	Several shortages in the institutional design impede consolidation	1
Representative Consolidation	Interest groups are rather weak, party landscape polarized	6
Behavioral Consolidation	Several Veto-players are active and seek success not in the democratic system	0
Civic Culture	Low diffuse support for democracy, lack of knowledge about democracy	12

Fig.5: by Claus F. Faulenbach

To sum up one can say that on the level of institutional consolidation the work could be extended if possible, since the degree of consolidation is of great importance for all the other levels as well. Moreover the analysis has shown that on the level of representative consolidation there are still different possibilities to extend the work, foremost in the party landscape and with interest organizations. The level of behavioral consolidation seems to be only influenceable through the other levels, thus no organization works directly on this level. All in all the level of civic culture is from the amount of projects and also from the variety of projects a main focus area of the three organizations, which focus quite well on the problems of consolidation of this level.

### **Conclusion – Where is the Concept Useful?**

The research question that should be answered was: *Can the concept of democratic consolidation help external actors in the field of democracy assistance in fragile democracies to analyze and modify (or improve) their programs to consolidate the democracy?* Of course the question cannot be answered in one sentence. Basically the concept can provide three things for actors in the field of democracy assistance:

First, the concept *is a tool for the analysis of the state of democracy* in a country. Merkel's concept with its four levels of analysis and different elements of

consolidation on each level enables the student of consolidation to take a look at the weaknesses of the democratic system and to find out on which levels of consolidation they lie. The levels of Merkel structure the complicated and complex system of a democracy by dividing it into the four layers without neglecting the interdependences between them. The concept shows aspects which are of special importance for the consolidation of a democratic system.

The concept brings order in the complex system of democracy, and thus making easier a systematic analysis of the degree and character of consolidation – that is the state of democracy. Nevertheless Merkel's concept lacks somehow elements or aspects of consolidation like the importance of the media for a democracy, which shows that even with a comprehensive concept – like Merkel's – a democracy can never be completely analyzed.

Second, programs or *projects of actors in the field of democracy assistance can be seen against the background of the state of consolidation* of a country and within the scheme of Merkel's concept of consolidation. The concept allows not only to analyze the state of democracy within the different levels but to assign the projects or programs of actors of democracy assistance with the same system. This is possible without big problems since Merkel gives rather clear explanations for each level by naming different criteria of consolidation, which makes the mapping not too difficult. This mapping helps to see the work in the field of democracy assistance, the programs and projects in the whole system of democracy. Figuratively speaking the programs can be seen on a the map of democratic consolidation with roughly the place they are aiming at. This mapping of the projects can help external actors of democracy assistance to see their programs not isolated, but within the overall system of democracy and show the targets, the strengths and weaknesses of their programs.

Third, the concept can *help actors of democracy assistance to modify their work* in a country. Through the analysis of the state of democracy and the mapping of the programs the organizations can find the weaknesses of the democratic system, see on which problems their programs are targeting and then find out in which areas there is nothing done by the organizations but which need efforts for (further) consolidation.

So basically from each step of analysis that has been done, organizations can profit: from the (1) analysis of the state of democracy, from (2) mapping the

projects within the democratic system and from (3) finding fields which are not targeted at by programs.

### Analysis with Merkel's Concept

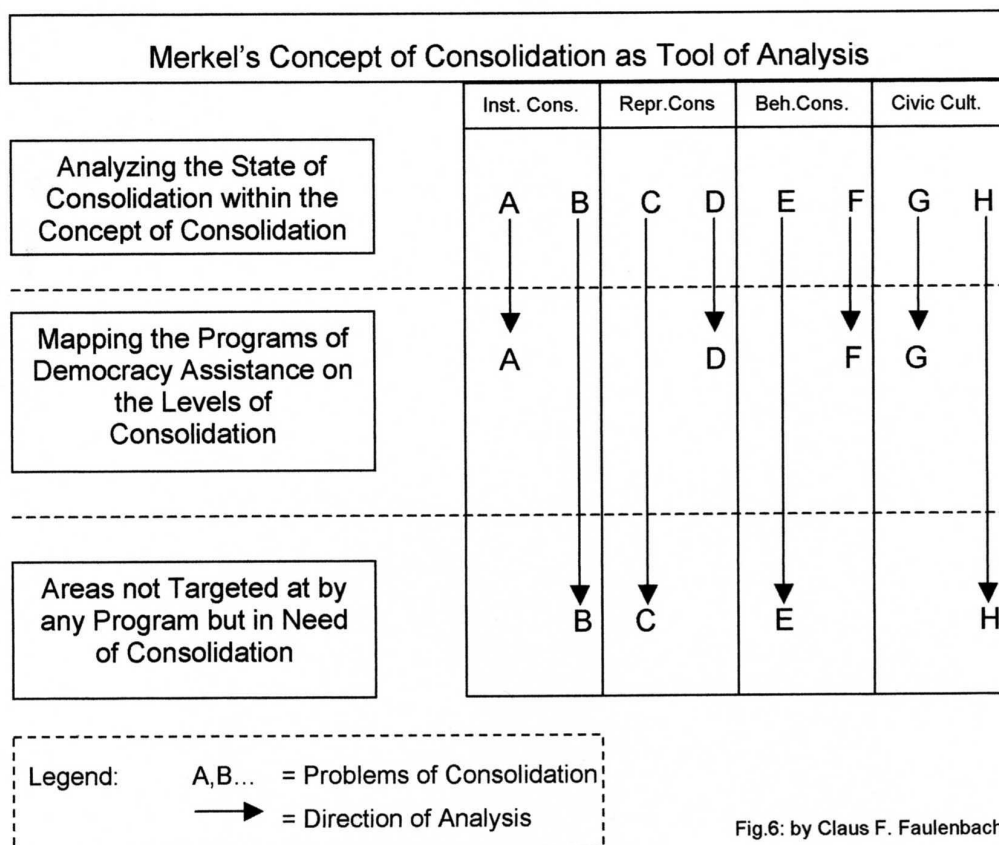


Fig.6: by Claus F. Faulenbach

However the concept of democratic consolidation cannot provide information on how well the work of the organization is done. The evaluation of democracy assistance is a very difficult field, especially when it comes to civic culture. Moreover the concept of consolidation cannot help to find the best ways of helping a democracy, it can only point on problems of consolidation without providing a solution for them.

All in all one might ask if a country analysis without the concept of Merkel or any other concept of consolidation might not provide the same result. Probably yes, but the Merkel's concept of consolidation helps to bring structure into the system of democracy and due to its detailedness it shows many elements which are important for consolidation and also shows the work of the organizations within the concept. Of course no actor in the field of democracy assistance just starts a program on the basis of only one analysis, but still the concept might

provide leadoff information about possible new working fields, so that afterwards detailed studies about the identified problem area are conducted which then might lead to other, new or different, programs.

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