In order to investigate the relationship between the discrepancy factors and political support, the items measuring political support were subjected to a factor analysis using principal components extraction with oblique rotation which does not presume orthogonal factors.[58] The factor loadings were put to work to derive factor scores for each survey respondent. Regression method was selected to construct the factor scales. Two factors are distinguished. The first factor describes support for the Swiss government. The second factor describes a general attitude of political support that encompasses support for the parliament, politicians, and democracy. High levels of the efficiency discrepancy factor ($r = -.201$, $p < .001$) and the competition discrepancy factor ($r = -.150$, $p < .001$) are significantly associated with lower levels of political support for the government. High levels of the efficiency discrepancy factors ($r= -.354$, $p < .001$) and the consensus discrepancy factor ($r= -.251$, $p < .001$) are significantly associated with lower levels of political support for the parliament, politicians, and democracy.

5.4. Summary and Discussion

Because no standardized scales to measure citizens' preferences regarding political decision-making processes and according perceptions currently exist, one important aim of this study was the development and validation of a standardized scale for the measurement of citizens' process preferences and process perceptions. This chapter, then, proposed the first systematic scales to measure process preferences and related perceptions of political processes. For the measurement of process preferences, a measurement model was developed, tested and validated on another independent sample. Three dimensions of process preferences were distinguished: consensus-orientation, competition and efficiency. A theory-driven correlated factors model was tested on two independent samples using CFA. Whereas the first sample did indicate modification on the model, the second sample was used to validate the modified model. Further comparisons with alternative models did indicate that the model is superior to a one-factorial model, which underlines discriminant validity. The process preference scale encompasses three dimensions with three indicators each: consensus-orientation (concede a point, consider diverging interests, compromises), competition (force their points, put their plans through, hierarchical orders), and efficiency (fast decision-making, simple and short processes, avoid delays). Adapting the measurement model of the process preferences scale, a scale measuring citizens' perception of political processes was developed. In addition, evidence was provided for the discriminant validity between process preferences and process

58 Results from the factor analysis are, based on the pattern matrix, for factor 1: satisfaction government .870, performance government .904, for factor 2: trust parliament .616, performance parliament .594, performance politicians .609, satisfaction politicians .711, trust politicians .643, satisfaction democracy .899, ideal democracy .882. Item wordings are presented in footnote 89.

perceptions. The findings suggest that the process preferences and process perception scales allow measuring process preferences and related perceptions separately.

Further studies confirmed the cultural equivalence of the process preferences scale and its invariance as regards two different objects of assessment (parliament, government). The cultural invariance of a scale is an essential precondition to be able to meaningfully interpret differences in scores across different cultures. The scale's invariance as regards the object of assessment is a precondition to be able to meaningfully analyze possible differences in scores. Based on the confirmed invariance of the scale as regards different objects of assessment, findings indicated that subjects' preferences as regards political processes in the government and the parliament do not differ substantially.

In further analysis, the construct validity of the scales was tested. A left political ideology was found to be associated with preferences for the consensus-orientation of political processes, whereas a right political orientation was found to be related to a preference for efficient procedures. Both the discrepancy between the efficiency perceptions and related preferences as well as the discrepancy between consensus perceptions and related preferences were found to be associated with support for the government. More precisely, strong discrepancies – in the sense that preferences exceed perceptions – were found to be associated with lower levels of political support. This finding is in line with other research indicating that large discrepancies between political preferences and perceptions are linked to low levels of political support (Kimball & Patterson, 1997; S. C. Patterson, et al., 1969).

This study provides first empirical evidence of the concept of process preferences and process perceptions, but it also has several limitations. While the successful validation of the process preferences and process perceptions scales is the main focus of this article, it can only be a first step in future research. Hence, future research could investigate the role of other process aspects, such as inclusiveness, transparency, equality, and responsiveness (cf. Kaina, 2008).

The invariance of the process preferences scale was tested for preferences regarding parliament and government, but findings from this study might not hold for other objects of assessment, such as the political administrative sector, or individual political actors. Furthermore, testing the cultural invariance of the scale with data that encompass all nine variables and data from other countries would enhance the empirical validation of the scale's measurement invariance across different cultures. Moreover, the results might not generalize to other samples, because the samples used in this study are not representative for the Swiss or German citizens. Although this is not considered to be problematical for the purpose of scale development and validation, this study's samples hold implications for the generalizability of findings. The data presented here stem from samples that are characterized by a high level of political interest and high levels of formal education. Because preferences are based on knowledge and information (Druckman & Lupia, 2000), it seems plausible to assume that for individuals with low knowledge about politics or no interest in politics, process preferences might not be as diverse or be characterized by a different conceptual structure. Thus, tests of the proposed scale on data that stems from sam-

ples with participants that are only moderately or not interested in politics, as well as tests with data from individuals with low formal education, are needed.

Notwithstanding their limitations, the developed scales are a first attempt towards a standardized measurement of process preferences and perceptions. This study makes the assumption that considering process preference might contribute to research on media effects on political support. But before this assumption is investigated in Chapter 7, the following chapter presents insights on the short-term impact of media information on the perception of political processes based on an experimental study.