

Parameter	Estimate	Parameter	Estimate
<b>Support for the government (<math>r^2 = .17</math>)</b>	<b>n=361</b>	<b>Support for politicians (<math>r^2 = .35</math>)</b>	<b>n=360</b>
Newspaper Use → Consensus perception	0.07	Newspaper Use → Consensus perception	0.06
Newspaper Use → Efficiency perception	0.05	Newspaper Use → Efficiency perception	0.08
Television Use → Consensus perception	-0.08	Television Use → Consensus perception	-0.08
Television Use → Efficiency perception	-0.17 *	Television Use → Efficiency perception	-0.15 *
Consensus perception → Support	0.10	Consensus perception → Support	0.45 *
Efficiency perception → Support	0.27 *	Efficiency perception → Support	0.33 *
<b>Support for the parliament (<math>r^2 = .26</math>)</b>	<b>n=362</b>	<b>Support for democracy (<math>r^2 = .30</math>)</b>	<b>n=361</b>
Newspaper Use → Consensus perception	0.10	Press Use → Consensus perception	0.11
Newspaper Use → Efficiency perception	0.04	Press Use → Efficiency perception	0.05
Television Use → Consensus perception	-0.07	Television Use → Consensus perception	-0.08
Television Use → Efficiency perception	-0.18 *	Television Use → Efficiency perception	-0.17 *
Consensus perception → Support	0.29 *	Consensus perception → Support	0.42 *
Efficiency perception → Support	0.30 *	Efficiency perception → Support	0.27 *

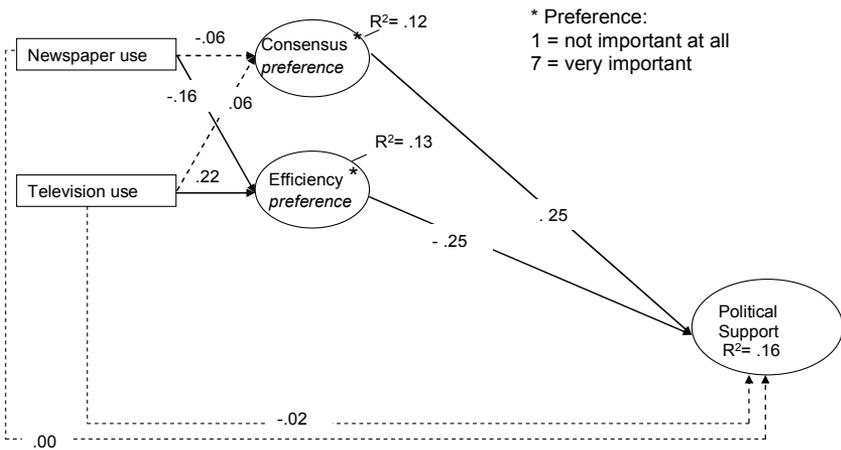
Note. \* indicates that path estimates are statistically significant at .05 or above.

*Table 7.2. Predicting Support for Different Objects of Evaluation*

### 7.3.2. The Impact of Television Use on Process Preferences and Political Support

To provide answers with regard to the second research question, referring to the impact of media use on citizens' process preferences and the effect of process preferences on political support, a model was tested that includes process preferences as a mediator of the effect of routine media use on political support (see Figure 7.3). Newspaper use and television use were specified as predictors of consensus preference, efficiency preference and political support. In addition, consensus preference and efficiency preference were specified as predictors of political support. The variables television use and newspaper use were allowed to correlate. Both newspaper use ( $\beta = -0.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and television use ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly predicted preference regarding the efficiency of political processes. The more intensively newspapers are used for political information, the less strong are preferences as regards the efficiency of political processes. In contrast, the more intensively television is used for political information, the stronger are preferences as regards the efficiency of political processes. In contrast, neither television use nor newspaper use had a significant effect on consensus preferences. Consensus preferences, however, were a strong significant predictor of political support ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Political support was also significantly affected by efficiency preferences ( $\beta = -0.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Whereas there is a positive relationship between consensus preferences and political support, indicating that the stronger the consensus preferences, the higher is the level of political support, the relationship between efficiency preferences and political support is negative. This indicates that the stronger the efficiency preferences, the lower is the level of political support. In addition, the model shows significant effects of political ideology ( $\beta = -0.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ), political experience ( $\beta =$

-0.14,  $p < .05$ ) and age ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on preferences regarding the consensus-orientation of political processes and significant effects of gender ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and age ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on preferences regarding the efficiency of political processes. There is also a significant effect of age ( $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on political support. This indicates that for political left oriented persons, people with less political experience and persons of an older age, there is a greater probability of having strong consensus preferences than for political right oriented persons, people with intensive political experience and persons of a younger age. Persons of an older age and men are also more likely to prefer efficient processes than persons of a younger age and women. And the older a person is, the lower are the levels of political support. The model fit was satisfactory, with CFI = .93, RMSEA =.05 (90% CI = .04, .06), Chi-Square = 360.66, df = 167.



Note. Shown are standardized path coefficients. All the solid line paths are statistically significant at .05 or above. Dashed lines indicate insignificant paths. Chi-Square (df=167, N 356) =360.66, Comparative fit index is .93, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is .05 with a 90% confidence interval .04 - .06.

Figure 7.3. *The Impact of Media Use on Process Preferences and Political Support*

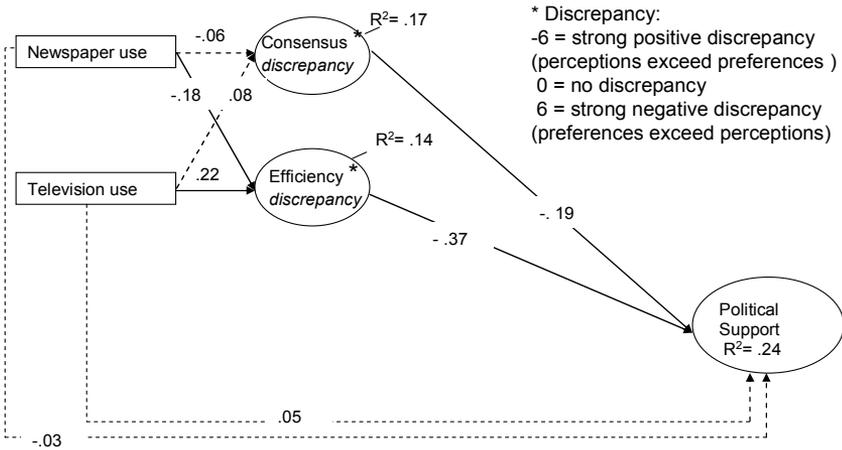
The results suggest possible indirect effects of newspaper use and television use on support via their impact on efficiency preferences. The indirect effect of newspaper use on political support via efficiency preference was  $\beta = 0.04$  and was not statistically significant as indicated by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982),  $Z_{\text{Sobel}}: 1.92$ ,  $p > .05$ . The indirect effect of television use on political support via efficiency preference was  $\beta = -0.05$  and was statistically significant as indicated by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982),  $Z_{\text{Sobel}}: 2.44$ ,  $p < .05$ . Thus, television use decreased political support by shaping citizens' efficiency preferences regarding political processes.

The previous findings indicate that television use may enhance the importance of efficient processes and at the same raise the impression that political processes are

inefficient. Thus, it seems warranted to suggest that television use may increase the discrepancy between respondents' efficiency preferences and the perception of political processes in terms of their efficiency. In order to probe this assumption, a model was tested that specifies the discrepancy between consensus preferences and consensus perceptions (consensus discrepancy) and the discrepancy between efficiency preferences and efficiency perceptions (efficiency discrepancy) as variables that mediate the impact of media use on political support (see Figure 7.4). Discrepancy items were computed by subtracting the preferences items from the respective perceptions items (with reversed coded scales so that low scores indicate that a certain aspect of political processes fully applies to reality). The latent factors consensus discrepancy and efficiency are modeled similar to the perceptions and preferences factors<sup>97</sup> (for more information on the measurement models see Appendix 10.3, for more information on the computation of discrepancy items see Section 6.3.3). Newspaper use and television use were specified as predictors of consensus discrepancy, efficiency discrepancy and political support. In addition, consensus discrepancy and efficiency discrepancy were specified as predictors of political support. The variables television use and newspaper use were allowed to correlate. Both newspaper use ( $\beta = -0.18, p < .05$ ) and television use ( $\beta = 0.22, p < .05$ ) predicted the efficiency discrepancy significantly. The more intensively newspapers are used for political information, the smaller is the efficiency discrepancy. In contrast, the more intensively television is used for political information, the greater is the efficiency discrepancy. In contrast, neither television use nor newspaper use had a significant effect on consensus discrepancy. Consensus discrepancy however, was a strong significant predictor of political support ( $\beta = -0.19, p < .05$ ). Political support was also significantly affected by efficiency discrepancy ( $\beta = -0.37, p < .05$ ). The stronger the consensus or the efficiency discrepancies are (in the sense that preferences exceed perceptions), the lower is the level of political support. In addition, the model shows significant effects of gender ( $\beta = -0.21, p < .05$ ), education ( $\beta = -0.14, p < .05$ ), political ideology ( $\beta = -0.18, p < .05$ ), political experiences ( $\beta = -0.13, p < .05$ ) and age ( $\beta = 0.26, p < .05$ ) on the magnitude of the discrepancy between consensus preferences and consensus perceptions. There is also a significant effect of age ( $\beta = 0.26, p < .05$ ) on the magnitude of the discrepancy between efficiency preferences. This indicates that for women, people with lower levels of formal education, political left oriented people, persons with lower levels of political experience and persons of an older age there is a greater probability of having a large negative discrepancy between consensus preferences and consensus perceptions (in the sense that preferences exceed perceptions) than men, people with higher levels of formal education, political right oriented people, persons with higher levels of political experience and persons of a younger age. And the older a person is, the larger is the

97 The consensus discrepancy factor encompasses the following discrepancy items: consider diverging interests, concede a point to the other side and the role of compromises. The efficiency discrepancy factor encompasses the following discrepancy items: fast decision-making, simple and short processes, avoid delays.

negative discrepancy between efficiency preferences and efficiency perceptions. The model fit was satisfactory, with CFI = .94, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .04, .06), Chi-Square = 337.38, df = 167.



Note. All the solid line paths are statistically significant at .05 or above. Dashed lines indicate insignificant paths. Chi-Square (df=167, N 356) =337.38, Comparative fit index is .94, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is .05 with a 90% confidence interval .04 - .06.

Figure 7.4. The Impact of Media Use on Discrepancies and Support

The results suggest possible indirect effects of newspaper use and television use on support via their impact on efficiency discrepancy. The indirect effect of newspaper use on political support via efficiency discrepancy was  $\beta = 0.07$  and was statistically significant as indicated by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982),  $Z_{\text{Sobel}}: 2.43, p < .05$ . The indirect effect of television use on political support via efficiency discrepancy was  $\beta = -0.08$  and was statistically significant as indicated by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982),  $Z_{\text{Sobel}}: 3.07, p < .05$ . The results suggest that media use has an indirect impact on political support by shaping citizens' efficiency discrepancies. Whereas the indirect effect of newspaper use on political support was positive, indicating that higher levels of newspaper use are associated with higher levels of political support, the indirect effect of television use on political support was negative, indicating that higher levels of television use are associated with lower levels of political support.

### 7.3.3. The Role of Process Preferences as Moderator of Effects on Political Support

One important objective of the present study is to explore the conditions under which media information about political processes affects political support. This study makes the argument that the impact of media-shaped perceptions of political processes on political support is particularly strong for subjects for whom related aspects of decision-making procedures are important. A variety of structural equation models were analyzed in order to test this assumption. In all of these models, socio-demographic control variables (gender, age, education, political experience, and political ideology) were included. They are not displayed in the figures in the interest of clarity.

Drawing on discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), this study assumes that process preferences moderate the relationship between process perceptions and political support. More precisely, it is hypothesized that the perception of political processes in terms of their consensus-orientation affects support particularly for those individuals who hold strong preferences as regards the consensus-orientation of political processes (H3a). Likewise, it is proposed that the perception of political processes in terms of their efficiency affects support particularly for those individuals who hold strong preferences as regards the efficiency of political processes (H4a). Because process preferences were measured continuously, I refrained from a multigroup comparison based on arbitrary cut-off values. Instead I specified a latent interaction model to test the hypotheses (Marsh et al., 2004). For the two process perceptions-preferences interaction factors (efficiency interaction and consensus interaction) there were three perception items and three preferences items each. I generated three indicators for each of the two latent interactions by multiplying items with similar factor loadings on latent predictor and moderator variables with each other (Marsh, et al., 2004). In order to build the discrepancy variables, the perception variables were recoded so that high scores indicate that the according aspects are perceived to not apply to decision-making processes in Switzerland. High scores on the preference variables indicate that according aspects of decision-making processes are important to the respondent. High scores on the interaction variables, then, indicate a large negative discrepancy between process perceptions and process preferences (negative discrepancy = aspects are important but do not apply to reality). Process perceptions (with reversed scale, mean-centred indicators), process preferences (with mean-centred indicators) and the latent interaction thereof were specified as predictors of political support. All predictors were allowed to correlate. The model showed a significant effect of consensus perception on support ( $\beta = -0.25, p < .05$ ), a significant effect of efficiency perception on support ( $\beta = -0.27, p < .05$ ), a significant effect of consensus preference on support ( $\beta = 0.18, p < .05$ ), a significant effect of the latent interaction between consensus perception and consensus preference on support ( $\beta = -0.25, p < .05$ ), and a significant effect of the latent interaction between efficiency perception and efficiency preference on support ( $\beta = -0.17, p < .05$ ). There was also a significant effect of age on political support ( $\beta = -0.14, p <$