This section investigates the relationship between routine media use and political support. The correlations between variables measuring media use, process perceptions, process preferences and political support are displayed in Table 7.1. The perceptions of political processes were significantly associated with political support in a way that both the perception of political processes as consensus-oriented and the perception of political processes as efficient are linked with higher levels of political support. Moreover, process preferences were significantly related to political support. Whereas high levels of consensus preferences are associated with high levels of political support, high levels of efficiency preferences are related to low levels of political support. Television use is significantly related to efficiency perception and efficiency preference. A high intensity of television use is associated with the perception of political processes as less efficient. A high intensity of television use is linked to stronger preferences regarding the efficiency of decision-making processes. There is no significant relationship between newspaper use and process perceptions or political support.

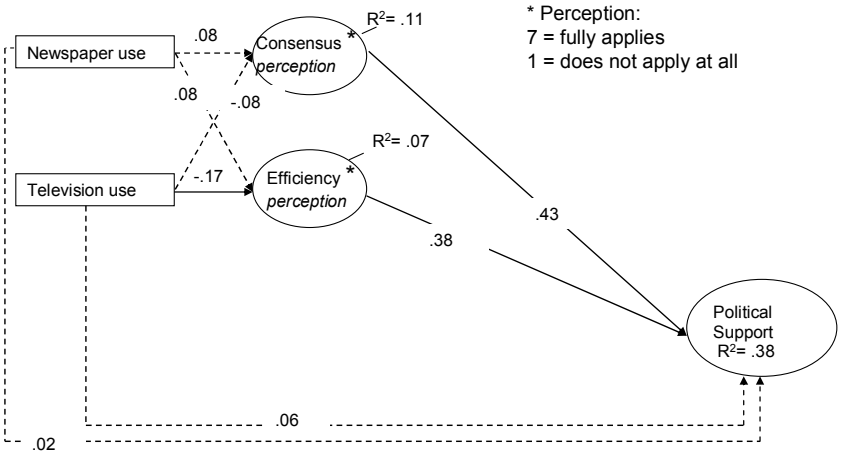
A variety of structural equation models were analyzed in order to test the assumptions formulated in Section 7.3.1. The analyses presented here are based on the sample of participants in the two treatment groups (n = 366).[95] Socio-demographic control variables (gender, age, education, political experience, and political ideology) were included in all of these models. In the interest of clarity, they are not displayed in the figures, however. Disturbances and error terms are omitted from the figures for clarity as well. Besides manifest variables (i.e. newspaper use, television use and exposure to stimulus articles) there are latent variables included in the models which are measured by several indicators in order to correct for measurement errors. The according measurement models are described in Appendix 10.3. In the figures, manifest variables are presented in squares and latent variables are presented in circles. Section 7.3.1 presents analyses of the role of routine media use as a predictor of political support. More precisely, the assumption that respondents' process perceptions mediate the impact of media use on political support is investigated. In addition, the media's impact on preferences regarding political decision-making processes and the discrepancy between preferences and perceptions is investigated (Section 7.3.2). In Section 7.3.3, the role of process preferences as a moderator of the impact of media on political support is analyzed. Section 7.3.4 presents

95 Because no measurement of respondents' article impressions exists for the participants in the control group, models that include the article impression variables are based on the sample of participants in the two treatment groups. In order to facilitate comparisons between the models, not only the models including the impression variables but also all other models are based on the sample of participants in the two treatment groups. Comparisons of results for models which are based on the sample with participants in the treatment groups (n = 366) with results for the same models based on the total sample (n = 523) show that the results differ only marginally (some path estimates differ slightly in the second digit after the decimal point).

findings concerning the moderating impact of chronic accessibility. In Section 7.3.5, the joint impact of situational exposure to media articles and long-term media use is explored.

7.3.1. The Impact of Television Use on Process Perceptions and Political Support

The following model tests the assumption that subjects' perceptions of the consensus-orientation of political processes and their perception of the efficiency of political processes mediate the impact of television use on political support (see Figure 7.2). Newspaper use and television use were specified as predictors of consensus perception, efficiency perception and political support. In addition, consensus perception and efficiency perception were specified as predictors of political support. The variables television use and newspaper use were allowed to correlate. Television use predicted the efficiency perception of political processes significantly (β = -0.17, $p < .05$), supporting H2. The more intensively television is used for political information, the less are political processes perceived as efficient. In contrast, neither television nor newspaper use had a significant effect on consensus perception. Thus, H1 is not supported. The consensus perception, however, was a strong significant predictor of political support ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < .05$). Political support was also significantly affected by efficiency perception ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < .05$). The less efficient or consensus-oriented political processes are perceived to be, the lower is the level of political support. Thus, H3 and H4 were supported. The support for H2 and H4 indicates possible indirect effects of television use on political support via the perception of political processes as inefficient. The indirect effect of television use on political support via efficiency perception was $\beta = -0.06$ and was statistically significant as indicated by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982), Z_{Sobel}: 2.20, $p < .05$. Thus, television use had an indirect impact on political support by shaping the efficiency perception of political processes. In addition, the model shows significant effects of gender ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$), education ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < .05$) and age (β = -0.16, $p < .05$) on the consensus perception of political processes and a significant effect of age (β = -0.20, $p < .05$) on the efficiency perception of political processes. There is also a significant effect of gender (β = -0.17, $p < .05$) on political support. This indicates that men, highly educated persons and persons of a younger age are more likely to perceive political processes as consensus-oriented than women, persons with lower levels of formal education and persons of older age. Persons of a younger age also are more likely to perceive political processes as efficient than persons of older age. And women are more likely to have high levels of political support than men. The model fit was satisfactory, with CFI = .94, RMSEA =.05 (90% CI = .04, .06), Chi-Square = 352.40, 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 354) =352.40, Comparative fit index is .94, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is .05 with a 90% confidence interval .04 - .06.

Figure 7.2. The Impact of Media Use on Process Perceptions and Political Support

In order to provide answers to the fist research question on potential differences in predicting political support for the government, support for the parliament, support for political actors, and support for democracy, the model presented in Figure 7.2 was tested separately for the specific objects of evaluation (government, parliament, political actors, and democracy). More precisely, in each model, newspaper use and television use were specified as predictors of consensus perception, efficiency perception and support for the precise object of evaluation. In addition, consensus perception and efficiency perception were specified as predictors of support for the precise object of evaluation. The variables television use and newspaper use were allowed to correlate. The results are presented in Table 7.2. In general, the results show that intensive use of political information on television is associated with a decrease of respondents' perception that political processes are efficient. The perception of political processes, in turn, is related with support for the different objects of evaluation in the sense that the perception of political processes as not efficient and/or the perception of political processes as not consensus-oriented are linked to lower levels of political support. As regards differences in the predictive power, the findings suggest that the specified predictors have the largest predictive power with regard to support for politicians ($r^2 = .35$), and the least predictive power with regard to support for the government ($r^2 = .17$). Looking at the impact of the distinct predictors on the different attitudes of political support, the results indicate that there is a significant impact of consensus perception on support for the parliament, support for politicians, and support for democracy. However, there was no significant effect of consensus perceptions on support for the government. And an-

other difference is noteworthy: The efficiency perception exerts a strong influence on support for the government. With regard to support for politicians and support for democracy, however, the impact of the consensus perception on support is stronger than the influence of efficiency perception. The impact of the socio-demographic control variables on the perception of political processes as consensus-oriented and efficient is similar to previously reported findings (see Section 6.5.1).[96] There are, however, differences as regards the control variables' impact on support for the different objects of evaluation. In line with previously reported findings (see Section 6.5.1), gender was a significant predictor of support for the parliament ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < .05$), support for politicians ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < .05$) and support for democracy ($\beta = -0.10$, $p < .05$). Support for the government, however, was significantly affected by political ideology ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < .05$). This result indicates that the more a person is oriented towards the political right, the lower is this person's support for the government. The model fit for the model predicting support for the government was satisfactory, with CFI = .97, RMSEA =.04 (90% CI = .02, .06), Chi-Square = 90.46, df = 53. The model fit for the model predicting support for the parliament was satisfactory, with CFI = .98, RMSEA =.03 (90% CI = .00, .05), Chi-Square = 74.03, df = 52. The model fit for the model predicting support for politicians was satisfactory, with CFI = .98, RMSEA =.03 (90% CI = .00, .05), Chi-Square = 92.65, df = 66. The model fit for the model predicting support for democracy was satisfactory, with CFI = .96, RMSEA =.05 (90% CI = .03, .06), Chi-Square = 95.79, df = 52.

96 As for the model estimating support for the government, there was a significant effect of gender ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .05$), education ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < .05$) and age ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < .05$) on the consensus perception of political processes and a significant effect of age ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < .05$) on the efficiency perception of political processes. As for the model estimating support for the parliament, there was a significant effect of gender ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < .05$), education ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .05$) and age ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < .05$) on the consensus perception of political processes and a significant effect of age ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < .05$) on the efficiency perception of political processes. As for the model estimating support politicians, there was a significant effect of gender ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$), education ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .05$) and age ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < .05$) on the consensus perception of political processes and a significant effect of age ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < .05$) on the efficiency perception of political processes. As for the model estimating support for democracy, there was a significant effect of gender ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .05$), education ($\beta = 0.91$, $p < .05$) and age ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < .05$) on the consensus perception of political processes and a significant effect of age ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < .05$) on the efficiency perception of political processes.

Parameter	Estimate		Parameter	Estimate	
Support for the government (r^2= .17)	n=361		Support for politicians (r^2= .35)	n=360	
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	*
Support for the parliament (r^2= .26)	n=362		Support for democracy (r^2= .30)	n=361	
Newspaper Use → Consensus perception	0.10		Press Use → Consensus perception	0.11	
Newspaper Use→ Efficiency perception	0.04		PressUse → 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 ($\beta =$