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## KEPPLINGER, HANS MATHIAS (1943–)

Hans Mathias Kepplinger teaches political communication, journalism, and media effects at the University of Mainz. This author of 30 books and 250 articles is one of the most published communication scholars in Germany. His firm international orientation has taken him as a visiting scholar to University of California-Berkeley, University of Tunis, Southern Illinois University, Università della Svizzera Italiana, and Harvard University. He is coeditor of the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* and sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Communication* and the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*.

Kepplinger gained his PhD in political science in 1970 and his postdoctoral lecturing qualification in communications in 1977. He was a Heisenberg scholarship holder of the German Science Foundation (1978–1982) and, after his appointment to the University of Mainz in 1982, served as director of the Institut fuer Publizistik and dean of the Faculty of Social Science. Besides his strong managerial and leadership capabilities, Kepplinger is a gifted teacher, demanding adviser, and a highly active scholar with a sense for innovative methodological approaches to a broad range of socially relevant research questions. He was the first in Germany to study systematically the influence of television presentational techniques and how the resulting impressions of nonverbal signals thus influenced the politician's public image. His early case studies on conscientious objection and the oil crisis were among the first quantitative analyses to conceptualize political communication as a complex process in which several protagonists act on various institutional levels and—because their actions are not isolated but interrelated—lead to dynamics that need to be studied with longitudinal designs.

Kepplinger's more recent studies in political communication focused on the question of whether long-term trends of negativism and symbolic politics that

are characteristic of U.S. news coverage can also be observed in the German press. One follow-up study titled *Farewell to the Rational Voter* (2005) looked at the effects of TV upon the images of politicians and their impact upon voting behavior over a 5-year period and combines survey panel data with news content data. Another follow-up study identified prototypical mechanisms that steer the construction of mediated scandals in the political and environmental domain.

Among Kepplinger's most important contributions to journalism research have been his involvement in the first cross-national, strictly comparative survey of news journalists using equivalent samples from Germany and England and the conclusions he and Koecher (1990) drew for the concept of media professionalism. His arguably most influential contribution to the study of journalism is his theory of instrumental actualization. With this theory, Kepplinger investigated empirically how journalists' predispositions affect their judgment on the newsworthiness of a controversial story. In this quasi-experimental study, news items supporting the journalist's own opinion on the issue at hand were attributed a higher news value than those that ran counter to these opinions.

Frank Esser

### Further Readings

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## KERRY, JOHN (1943–)

John Forbes Kerry was born in Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Colorado. The son of a foreign service officer, Kerry was raised Catholic and spent his childhood primarily on international soil. After graduating from Yale University, Kerry joined the U.S. Navy and did two tours of duty in Vietnam from 1966 to 1970. He received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and three purple hearts. Upon his return from Vietnam, Kerry became actively involved in "Vietnam Veterans Against the War," and in 1971, he was the first Vietnam veteran to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the atrocities of the war. In a 2-hour-long hearing, Kerry expressed resentment and consternation about war crimes he had witnessed that were perpetrated by U.S. servicemen sent to "die for the biggest nothing in history." Kerry posed the compelling question, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" The 27-year-old Kerry contended that the reason for the prolonged fighting in Vietnam and President Richard M. Nixon's recalcitrance in considering its end was strictly political. "Someone has to die so that Nixon won't be, and these are his words, 'the first President to lose a war.'" Not long after the hearing, in a dramatic demonstration, Kerry, along with 800 other veterans, publicly cast their medals and ribbons over a barrier to the front steps of the U.S. Capitol building.

These antiwar protests, in conjunction with the publication of his first book, *The New Soldier* (1971), propelled Kerry's political career. Following his graduation from Boston College Law School, Kerry worked for the district attorney's office in Massachusetts, and in 1982 won the office of lieutenant governor of Massachusetts. Three years later, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, succeeding Paul Tsongas. Characterized as a left-of-center legislator, Kerry was reelected to the Senate in 1990, 1996, and 2002. In 2004, Kerry accepted the Democratic nomination for president.

Kerry focused his presidential campaign on a critique of the Bush administration's foreign policy, especially in relation to the war in Iraq, and this largely negative strategy seemed a reasonable basis for running against an apparently vulnerable incumbent.