Kepplinger's most important contributions to journalism research have been his involvement in the first cross-national, strictly comparative survey of new journalists using equivalent samples from Germany and England and the conclusions he and Koeccher (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


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 metals 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 1996, 1998, 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.