

**Non-verbal communication and body language in  
creating a meaningful life: Angela Merkel in psychobiography**  
*Ulrich Sollmann and Claude-Hélène Mayer*

**book chapter 2021**

**U. Sollmann**

Guest Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law  
(SHUPL), Shanghai  
Sino-German Academy of Psychotherapy, Germany  
Höfestr. 87, D-44801 Bochum  
email: [sollmann@sollmann-online.de](mailto:sollmann@sollmann-online.de)

**C.-H. Mayer** (✉)

Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management,  
D Ring 4, Kingsway and University Road, Auckland Park  
University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

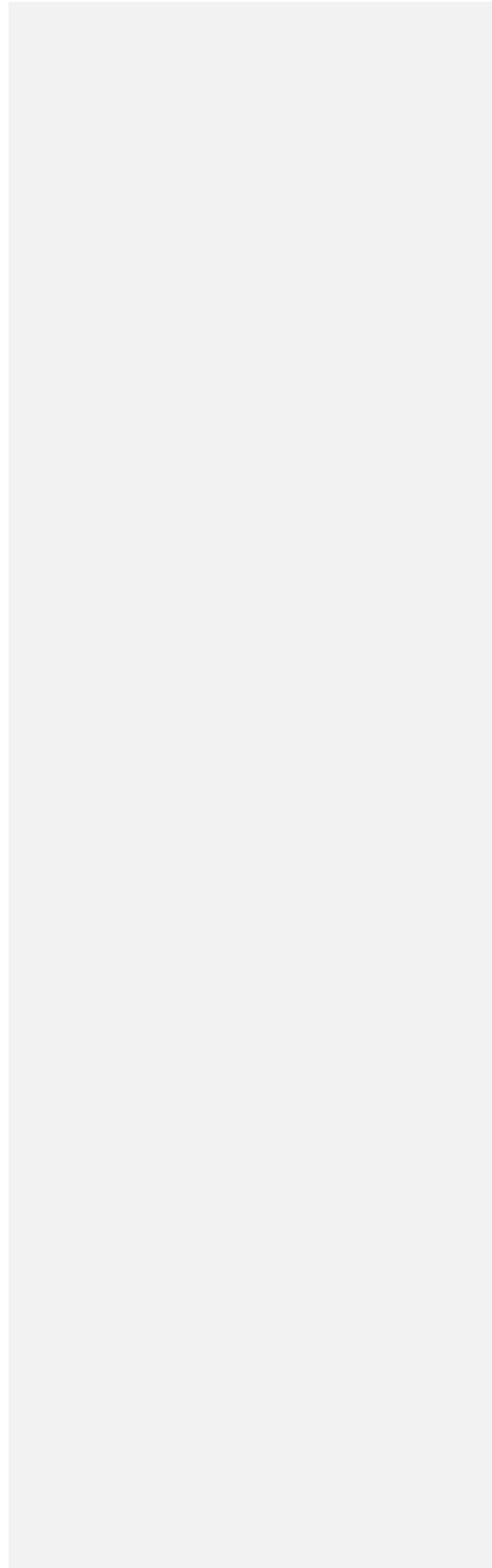
Institut für Therapeutische Kommunikation und Sprachgebrauch,  
Europa Universität Viadrina, Logenstrasse 11, 15230 Frankfurt  
(Oder), Germany  
e-mail: [claudemayer@gmx.net](mailto:claudemayer@gmx.net)

**Ulrich Sollmann** (Dipl. rer. soc.) is a social scientist, body  
psychotherapist, executive coach in management and politics,  
publicist, blogger. He is especially engaged in the field of  
transcultural communication ethnology, infant observation, person  
and systemic-centered concepts of leadership and coaching, health  
behaviour, and shame.

**Claude-Hélène Mayer** (Dr. habil., PhD, PhD) is a full professor in  
Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the Department of  
Industrial Psychology and People Management at the University of  
Johannesburg, and an Adjunct Professor at the European University  
Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. Her research areas are  
transcultural mental health, sense of coherence, shame, transcultural  
conflict management and mediation, creativity, psychobiography,

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women in leadership, and organisations in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



**Abstract**

Psychobiography is a well established methodological approach to explore the entire lifespan or specific events in the life of extraordinary individuals by using psychological theories.

This study uses a new psychobiographical focus, exploring the interplay of personality, non-verbal communication and body language to analyse the meaning of specific life events in the life of Angela Merkel, the contemporary German chancellor. It thereby contributes to political psychological psychobiographies of global women leaders through adult observation.

The study evaluates how Merkel uses non-verbal communication and body language to establish herself as a meaningful chancellor.

Methodologically, a hermeneutical research paradigm is used, with Merkel being purposefully sampled as the subject of research. This study draws on written accounts for analysis and interpretation of Merkel and refers to media scenario as a relevant methodological reference for adult observation, exploring Merkel as a public figure.

Accordingly, the study expands on previously used theories in psychobiography, while contributing to new and original research on Angela Merkel as one of the women leaders in the world.

**Keywords:** non-verbal communication, personality, body language, psychobiography, woman leader, adult observation

*Always be more  
than you appear and  
never appear  
to be more  
than you are.*

*Angela Merkel*

### **1. Introduction**

Psychobiographical studies have in the past often been based on psychoanalytical traditions which evaluate the life or specific episodes in lives and their meaningfulness, based on psychological theories which take cognitive-emotional development into consideration (Schultz, 2005; Mayer & Kovary, 2019). The research subjects have usually been male and anchored in Western contexts (Wegener, 2020). This focus on extraordinary white Western men has been criticised previously (Niekerk & Fouché, 2010a, 2010b). The present chapter contributes new and original insights into meaning-making in the life of an extraordinary woman leader.

The study on which this chapter is based aims to make a difference in the tradition of psychobiographical research. First, it uses a psychological theoretical background which is anchored in a psychoanalytic and at the same time bioenergetic-analytic tradition (Lowen, 2008; Sollmann, 1984), expanding a purely psychoanalytic view often used in psychobiography. It shifts the focus from analysis of the lived experience and development of behaviour, attitudes, values, thought styles and description of life episodes, to an analysis

of the non-verbal and medially represented image and behaviour patterns. It primarily analyses the body language of the subject.

Second, this chapter focuses on an extraordinary female political leader, the German chancellor from 2005 to 2021, Dr Angela Merkel by feeding into psychobiographical contemporary research on political leaders (Elovitz, 2016; McAdams, 2020). It is a psychobiographical work which contributes to political psychology (Kertzer & Tingley, 2018), requiring the psychobiographer to take a self-reflexive stand since the psychobiographical view on contemporary political leaders is challenging (Elovitz, 2016).

Third, the study uses the boundaries of traditional management, leadership and psychobiographies which have left women leaders under-represented on a global scale (Amaechi, 2020; Doubell & Streuwig, 2014; Sueda et al., 2020). In previous years, researchers have called for increased women leadership in specific regions and on global levels (Hingston, 2016). Sharma (2016) has emphasised the need for psychobiography to take a closer look at itself in the context of globalisation and cross-cultural contexts, supported by the expression of a growing need to explore the life of women leaders from psychobiographical perspectives across and beyond selected cultural contexts (Mayer & Kelley, 2021 submitted; Mayer, van Niekerk & Fouché, 2020; Prenter, 2015).

The study responds to the research questions: “How do the non-verbal aspects and the body language of Angela Merkel create meaning in her life across the lifespan?” and “Which embodied patterns of reaction and behaviour are activated under stress?”.

## **2. Theories on non-verbal communication, body language and adult observation**

Body language and non-verbal behaviour are the source of regulation of communication and interaction (Trautmann-Voigt, 2009). People react unconsciously in and to these patterns of movement, expression and behaviour without further self-reflection. However, studies have shown that experts are more accurate than non-experts in their judgements regarding human non-verbal behaviour patterns and adult observation.

The analysis of movement, expression, reaction, and behaviour patterns allows interactive access to the body image, which in turn allows conclusions about the subjective organisation of experience, self-perception and orientation/behaviour in the world. The practice and development of the concept of adult observation (Sollmann, 2006, 2018) found its first application in an analysis of the media scenario of the relationship patterns of tennis player Steffi Graf and her father (Sollmann, 1995), describing the relationship of daughter and father with reference to their biographical background. Through this analysis, the draft of an understanding of the specific and action-

relevant meanings of biographically shaped behaviour patterns was achieved.

In 1999, all the members of the then German Red-Green federal government were analysed according to the interplay of biographically shaped behavioural and impact patterns and media scenarios (Sollmann, 1999). In the following years, politicians such as Obama, Putin, Ma Yun (Sollmann, 2016), Wen Jiabao, Trump, and Merkel in dialogue with Xi Jinping were analysed.

Adult observation in politics focuses on the interaction of persons and their politics. For instance, the former American president Reagan said himself that he was the best actor of a president (Frey, 1999), while English Prime Minister Blair was one of the first international politicians to give politics a personal face by opening up his private life (Blair, 2010). The Austrian Haider used the political milieu to stage himself and his right-wing populist views in specific milieus (Ottomeyer, 2009), and as “media chancellor”, former German chancellor Schröder helped politicians to make an impact through media presence. Politics are therefore closely linked to the people who act. Four aspects of politics are party, programme, person and political power (Sollmann, 1999) which are expressed through the face of the politician who embodies this power and communicates the party's content, creating meaning.

Body language constitutes a central area of personal experience, of communicative events and of human development and is an interaction of general human characteristics, experience, personal peculiarities, and behavioural patterns. It is a language in itself (Molcho, 1983). Bodily expression can be trained and it might have an influence on identity development (Lowen, 2008).

Body expression indicates how someone stands in the world, how they react to their circumstances and how they have formed their personality. Therefore, in the personality structure, central biographical experiences and conflicts are, so to speak, preserved, engraved, embodied and become visible later in life. However, a personality model is not an image of a person, but a description of recurring experiences and patterns of action. Especially under stress, in conflicts and in crises, individuals unconsciously regress to early biographical experiences and patterns. They then serve as the best possible pattern in the sense of a survival mechanism (Sollmann, 1997). Usually, these patterns do not change and are activated under stress and high pressure.

### **3. Women in leadership and psychobiography**

With the ground-breaking work *The Seasons of a Woman's Life* of Levinson (1996), an important foundation was built to take deeper insight into the meaning-making of women across their lifespan, taking feelings, conflicts, dreams and psychological upheaval into account. More than a decade later, Ball and Rutherford (2008)



explored the life and work of exceptional women from a psychobiographical perspective.

Based on the pioneering research of Levinson, psychobiographies of men were published, such as those by Fouché, du Plessis and van Niekerk (2017). Psychobiographical research on women's lives and work increased during the past years, taking a focus on extraordinary women who were, for example, involved in political struggles in selected sociocultural contexts (Baatjes, 2015; Harisuker, 2016; Panelatti, 2018). Other studies have focused on female actresses such as Charlize Theron (Prenter, 2015), or female writers such as Maya Angelou (de Waal, 2020). However, very few studies have viewed women leaders in the global international political arena from a psychobiographical perspective. A few authors have focused on Hillary Clinton as a global woman leader (Elovitz, 2016; Sharma, 2016; Mutuku, 2018), and researchers have called for a deeper focus in the area (Hingston, 2016; Sharma, 2016; Mayer, 2021). No other known psychobiographical studies so far have focused on non-verbal or body-orientated theories and their use in the analysis of the individual.

Merkel has previously been described from psychobiographical perspectives with regard to her creativity (Mayer & van Niekerk, 2020), her wellness (Mayer, van Niekerk & Fouché, 2020), and her faith (Mayer, 2021). This chapter expands on the previous

psychobiographical accounts by taking the non-verbal and body language into consideration.

#### **4. Research methodology**

As a young discipline in psychological research traditions, psychobiographical research has undergone drastic changes from rather psychoanalytical research approaches towards a multifold use of psychological theories (Mayer & Kovary, 2019).

For this study, researchers used a hermeneutical single case study design for psychobiography (Fouché, du Plessis & van Niekerk, 2017) with a particular aim to describe, analyse and interpret the non-verbal communication and body language of Angela Merkel during selected episodes in her lifetime. This study is essentially grounded in identifying and understanding Merkel's patterns of reactions and behaviours. Based on the aforementioned, meaning in the life of the subject of research is recreated to display new and original findings in the light of psychobiographical theory (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010).

##### **4.1 Sample**

The sample of research is the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, one of the German, European and global leaders of contemporary times (Die Zeit, 2021). She was purposefully sampled (Musarrat Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019), based on the sampling criterion to analyse a female political leader from a psychobiographical perspective (Wegner,

2020) to provide insights from and guidance for future female leaders and to respond to the question of how to create a meaningful life from a specifically chosen theoretical perspective. This research study can therefore provide an example of human development (Basson, 2020).

#### **4.2 Data collection and analysis**

Data on Angela Merkel were collected through primary sources (autobiographical accounts, images, interviews) and secondary sources (biographical accounts, magazine and newspaper articles, videos, biographies, and images) according to Allport's (1961) tradition. Previous psychobiographical research on Merkel (Mayer, 2021; Mayer & van Niekerk, 2020, Mayer, Fouché, & Niekerk, 2020) was taken into consideration, together with previous studies of her non-verbal communication and body language (Sollmann, 1997).

Data were collected and analysed through adult observation and content analysis based on the five-step process of Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) which involves familiarisation and immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaboration, and finally interpretation and checking. In detail, data are further observed, approved and acknowledged in the following ways:

- Opinion polling (Forsa, 2003).
- Circular feedback by the observed person in relation to the meaningfulness of the results of the analysis as well as of the specific matching (Bauer, 2002).

- Specific self-statements of Angela Merkel in literature.
- The development and acceptance of the specific concept of adult observation (Sollmann, 2006, 2015, 2018).

Bioenergetic analysis of the data (Lowen, 2008; Sollmann, 1999) expresses the integration of experience, thinking, behaviour and understanding of the world. There are five central aspects of bioenergetic analysis: 1) the person is the respective body; 2) the individual dimensions of the personality act on each other as a unit; 3) life is essentially an excitation process; 4) the “grounding” of the person connects the initially specific excitation process with the body, the experience, the behaviour and the relation to the world; 5) the ensemble of biographically acquired experiences acts as a character structure that appears under stress. It is perceptible in the sense of a functional identity on all levels of the personality, as individually expressed by the person. Later in life, these patterns are very resistant to external influences.

Adult observation (Sollmann, 2006) as a research methodology in the political arena is a concept and an instrument for systematically recording and analysing the interplay between the person and political behavioural patterns, relating it to the specific context, and identifying implications for change. Adult observation deals with movement, posture, facial expressions and gestures in the media presentation of politicians. Movement sequences contain information about the

**Kommentiert [R1]:** What does this mean?

identity, age and gender of the actor, about intentions and state of mind or health. They play a central role in recognition and a few characteristic, distinctive points are enough for the brain to convey the identity of the person (Lischke, 2002).

#### **4.5 Quality criteria, ethical considerations and limitations**

Quality criteria in this qualitative research were applied to ensure rigor and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and data were reported in a qualitative reporting style (Yin, 2018).

The researchers followed ethical considerations to conduct research in an ethical, empathetic, accountable, respectful and benevolent manner with regard to the subject of research, her friends and family (Elms, 1994; Ponterotto, 2017). No private data sets were accessed so as not to violate any private boundaries (Ponterotto, 2015).

The study is limited to the in-depth analysis of Angela Merkel from a selected theoretical and methodological standpoint and provides in-depth, but no generalisable findings.

### **5. Findings and discussion**

Findings show that Angela Merkel's body language behaviour on the political stage can be divided into three phases. In the beginning, she appeared uncertain in the political arena. This was followed by a phase of emphasised, calm and unspectacular self-assurance or self-assertion. Finally, the period since 2009 is particularly characterised by Merkel's trademark hand gesture. This gesture, often described and

symbolised as Merkel's "rhombus", reflects Merkel's sovereignty in global political affairs (Hamburger Abendblatt, 2009).

In the following, selected scenarios are presented and interpreted.

### ***5.1 "One mistake is to treat people too confidentially" (Angela Merkel)***

In the 1990s shortly after the fall of communism, Merkel appeared uncertain, awkward and almost like a girl in her spontaneous expression on the political stage. Her clothes, her hairstyle and behaviour were atypical of the political arena. Her clothes resembled those of a "country girl". Her haircut did not correspond to the fashion of that time. Under pressure at a press conference, she appeared not to know where or how to stand, sit or where to go. When someone such as then-Chancellor Kohl or Minister Blüm, wanted to take her to a particular place, it seemed as if these men pushed her back and forth without being able to move independently or on her own initiative. Merkel smiled kindly but also embarrassedly, blushing in the process (Sollmann, 2002).

She clapped her hands as children do. Adults clap differently, in such a way that the slightly rounded palms touch each other with a more muffled sound. The fingers are curled. Merkel's fingers, on the other hand, remain spread and extended, while the whole of her palms clap against each other with a different sound.

When she stood at the lectern, delivering an engaging speech whose meaning she wanted to support with her gestures, Merkel surprisingly moved only her forearms and her hands, gesticulating strongly. She remained slightly bent forward; her upper arms close to her torso and her shoulders holding back any further movement. The intensity of the movement of her forearms, however, mirrored an intense impulsiveness within, which was not expressed with her whole body. She held herself back internally, and this was clearly visible externally.

In a particularly intense moment, she was very engaged and did not think herself under observation; then she played with her lips. These made a sucking movement, as children often do. One could almost see the pressure, the tension she was under at that moment.

### ***5.2 "I am a movement idiot" (Angela Merkel)***

From the early 2000s, Merkel began to speak more emphatically. Her movements, when standing at the lectern, were just as energetic as before, and yet she now clearly began to support, to reinforce what she said with an energetic nod of the head. She showed far more initiative and it seemed as if she was putting an end to the time when “she let herself be done with everything”, “when others did with her what they wanted”.

Merkel visibly changed her hairstyle and the style of her clothes. Her growing self-confidence allowed her to choose striking blazer colours that immediately caught the eye like a highlighter. She began to

approach people in a clearly visible, self-confident, purposeful, spontaneous, “normal” way.

Her gait, however, seemed clumsy, awkward and unsteady. One could almost get the impression that she had a walking defect. Later, in an interview, she described herself as “a movement idiot”. (Kölbl, 1999). When handed a bouquet of flowers, she tilted her head and upper body slightly forward, as if she were hiding.

When she did not think she was being watched, or if the camera's gaze caught her by surprise, one could discover a smiling, radiant, almost flirtatious Merkel. Through her charming smile, she showed an unexpected side. Then she was lively and spontaneous, shining in the direct dialogical exchange with her counterpart. Her quick wit and humour could spontaneously inspire an entire auditorium of listeners.

### ***5.3 "Everyone notices when I'm not myself" (Angela Merkel)***

In 2009, another phase of body language behaviour began, primarily and obviously characterised by a particular hand gesture. This gesture, also known as the “Merkel rhombus”, appears spontaneously every time the chancellor enters a public space, when journalists address her or when the cameras are pointed at her. She puts her fingertips together in such a way that the index fingers and thumbs create a rhombus-like structure. She does this with elegance and ease, as if this has always been a natural body movement.



For a long time, people puzzled over how this gesture came about. A possible explanation is that a physiotherapist may have recommended the gesture to Merkel to allow her to concentrate and collect herself in times of tension, giving the effect of certain Eastern meditation gestures. Merkel seeks and needs structure, support and security. By holding her hands in this position, especially when under stress, she gives herself this support.

In 2005 and 2009, an interactive internet project ([www.charismakurve.de](http://www.charismakurve.de)) took place in which Merkel and the opposing candidate were observed, analysed and evaluated in terms of their non-verbal impact and their body language. Before the photo session, the photographers had to specify exactly how, when, where and in which pose they wanted to shoot Merkel. If the photographers wanted to change something on the spot owing to spontaneous changes in light, this was not allowed. The previously agreed structure of the procedure had to be adhered to – otherwise Merkel would quit the shooting.

At the relationship level, Merkel shows a similar tendency: she feels emotionally safe in clear or fixed structures when conducting political business. In the chancellor's office she includes only a few trusted people who, once they have gained her trust, remain in that position for a very long time.

#### ***5.4 "In politics, I prefer to seek cooperation rather than confrontation" (Angela Merkel)***

In general, Merkel had come across as a likeable though unspectacular person. Therefore she caused great surprise when she convincingly and courageously dissociated herself from former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Kohl had previously been very supportive of Merkel's political career, always referring to her as "my girl". Indeed, until her emphatic break from Kohl, she had also appeared to be more like a girl. Her subsequent behaviour, as described in the media, was tantamount to a liberating blow for her self-awareness.

When Merkel was elected leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 2000, the party was heavily divided and threatened to break up. During this time, Merkel attended various regional CDU conferences and appeared quite unexciting to the media public. But surprisingly, after a year, the CDU as a party stood stronger and more unified than before. Instead of asking in detail about Merkel's recipe for success, the media began to take an interest in her communication and integration skills.

#### ***5.5 "I only slowly learned to play poker" (Angela Merkel)***

In the 2005 Bundestag election campaign, which she won in a neck-and-neck race against her predecessor, Merkel appeared rhetorically and factually confident as well as self-assured, especially in the TV duel when addressed directly. In the non-verbal confrontation with then-Chancellor Schröder, however, one could clearly see her

discomfort. Not only did she struggle to cope with the stress, but she was also unable to hide her emotions in this regard.

After her election as chancellor in 2005, she did not appear assertive or powerful in the conventional sense to many people, especially the media, during the first few years. She was compared to her male predecessors. Unlike Kohl and Schröder, Merkel came across as more communicative, with restrained self-control and an interest in relationship-building. She could listen to people and was open to dialogue. Personally and emotionally, she appeared reserved: qualities often attributed to her training as a physicist. Her language was simple, unpretentious and sober. As the first female politician in the country, she came across as rather bland, without any special trappings. As an unspectacular power politician, she was therefore “not taken seriously enough”.

#### ***5.6 "I can only rely on myself" (Angela Merkel)***

Behind the scenes however, almost in silence, she appears as a successful, strategically level-headed power politician. She did not make her strategies known as she worked through facts, decisions and results. Here is a significant example: in earlier years, a group of powerful male politicians (Merz, Koch, Öttinger and others) had joined forces in a concerted effort to oppose Merkel. Without engaging in a vociferous public power struggle, Merkel defeated these politicians from her immediate circle in 2002. From then onwards, these politicians have been unable to threaten her again.

Merkel is a proven, steadfast, successful, strategic and smart politician with enormous “silent” staying power. This seems to be a special talent in negotiations, in dealing with international conflicts and crises. After days of extremely tough negotiations, as often happens at the EU level, she can continue to appear competent the next morning, after only a few hours of sleep. At the same time, she remains calm and relaxed. Many other politicians, even if they are very experienced in this respect, would either not be able to hold out against such a marathon of negotiations, or their exhaustion would be clearly visible. She has the ability to continuously cope with great stress.

#### ***5.7 "Contact, matching and fitting is vital" (Angela Merkel)***

Merkel is not only highly esteemed internationally and accepted as a respected negotiating partner, but is also able to adjust transculturally to her respective counterpart. She is a master at keeping her own opinion and corresponding points of view emphatically in play without appearing ostentatiously politically “pushy”.

Merkel travels to China with various tasks and assignments in her luggage. There is always an additional task demanded by the media and others, namely to emphatically and immediately address the human rights violations in China. Merkel does so, but in her own way. For example, she visited China a few years ago and spent the first day shopping for food in the market with a famous TV chef. She paid with

her own money, from her own wallet. Later, in front of a running TV camera, she prepared Mao Tse Tung's favourite dish together with the chef.

During the following days, she held important political talks behind closed doors, finally giving a speech to students at one of the best universities in China. This speech was broadcast live and she clearly, critically and plainly addressed the human rights situation in China. She is able to master her political business without doing what is expected of her. She focuses on an unspectacular, political-communicative matching.

Many believe that Merkel is not a typical power politician; some miss her assertiveness and decisiveness in public. However, she has been the most popular politician in Germany for many years. The last election campaign (2017) was called the “Mutti election campaign”, suggesting that Merkel is like a political mother, sharing a close emotional bond with the citizens. People feel safe, secure, understood and cared for. One of the central messages in the election campaign was therefore the motto “Keep it up”.

**5.8 *"My day has to have a structure ... otherwise I get panicky because I can't get things together"* (Angela Merkel)**

The coronavirus pandemic shaped the chancellor's final year in office, particularly the 2020–21 transition. In the initial lockdown, Merkel underscored her approach with the words: “we are driving on sight”

despite all the opposition and hostility, signalling a sense of confidence in the face of great adversity. On one hand, from the fall 2020 onwards, the pandemic worsened sharply and uncontrollably. Country leaders behave almost in a panic. The political situation in Germany has become structureless, bringing on fatigue, attrition and despair, but also erratic rebellion.

Merkel seems somewhat withdrawn, powerless, less opinionated and lonely. The currently unpredictable, bizarre atmosphere in Germany characterises the social and political milieu. While some are taking flight, Merkel appears to be powerless and lacking in energy. She knows this personal behaviour pattern all too well. She loses energy to master crises without a secure and confidence-building structure to surround her.

Another dynamic makes it difficult for Merkel to gain new strength and regain her vigour. Triggered by the erratic political turmoil in Germany, people and the media are showering her with charges and accusations that seem less substantive than egotistical and devaluing. Both social and media dynamics certainly reactivate Merkel's old fears of panicking precisely when structure is lost. Her patterns are biographically shaped and characterised by stress and crisis. Accordingly, she

- can communicate, connect people, listen to and moderate groups of people;

- proceeds in small steps, is solution-orientated, but is not interested in a hurried decision;
- is able to respond to emotions, moods, fluctuations, individual characteristics, subliminal difficulties and tensions in such a way that trust, togetherness and coherence increase;
- is able to endure tension, differences and ambivalences without rushing;
- values and needs secure, reliable, clear structures in which she lives and operates politically;
- can develop sufficient energy, drive and assertiveness on the basis of communication, trust and the supporting structures;
- essentially needs a small circle of very familiar and reliable people whom she values and trusts (microstructure);
- needs continuity, reliability and fundamental acceptance in the larger circle of people with whom she has to deal politically (macrostructure);
- can be personally very reserved and does not depend on or strive to be applauded or cheered in public;
- acts and decides spontaneously, directly, decisively and strongly enforces decisions when her core values are affected.

The body perspective creates meaning in Merkel's life because body language shapes and characterises her biography. The more she becomes aware of it, the better she can integrate it into her daily life. Integrating means accepting what she cannot change, such as patterns

of experiences and reaction under stress. The following four aspects of body language have meaning for Merkel and for people in general:

- The body-self-experience enriches the experience of life, thereby creating meaning.
- Body language and body expression vitalise one`s own personality expression as well as offer the opportunity of self-development and development of bodily presence.
- Awareness of one`s own automatic patterns of bodily reaction support one to sense the limitations of expression.
- Knowing about this allows one to realise that it is necessary to improve one`s own stress management instead of trying or forcing oneself to change the non-verbal behaviour under stress.

This process of body-self-experience has an important integrating function which supports one`s own resilience and sense and expression of integrity.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations for theory and practice**

The study contributes to new and original insights into meaning-making in the life of an extraordinary woman leader. It contributes to expanding the psychobiographical theories and foci by focusing on non-verbal communication. Finally, it contributes to research on women leaders at the global level.



This chapter responds to two research questions, synthesising what can be analysed “from outside” (“other” image) and what is heard “from inside” (self-image). There is a convincing matching and congruence to be seen in Merkel’s embodied life from early childhood experiences up to her specific behaviour patterns as a politician. This integrity throughout the lifespan can be referred to as meaningful meaning-making throughout her lifetime.

There are some basic patterns of feeling, behaviour and expression which are activated especially under stress (life as a politician is stress). Merkel needs structure and builds structures which offer personal safety and security in the sense of protection. Being aware of this structure helps her to feel trust and bring meaning into challenging situations. She has developed a specific talent for meaningful communication, reaching out transculturally to find mutual solutions. She is direct and intuitive when she is in a safe context. Meaningfulness is created in safe spaces.

Future research should focus on in-depth analysis of non-verbal behaviour and patterns in contextualised psychobiographic perspectives. Thereby, the interaction and interrelationship of verbal and non-verbal behaviour should be explored. Social and cultural aspects of psychobiographies should be taken into consideration when analysing the non-verbal and its meaning for the individual.

Verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the context of gender, publicity and politics needs consideration. Successful leadership behaviour, body language and expression of movement should be explored. Psychobiographies need to open up to integrate verbal and non-verbal aspects of analysis, exploring adequate theoretical and methodological approaches from different psychological stances to foster holistic approaches to lifespan research.

The study provides practical insights since it offers valuable information for future women leaders to deal with non-verbal and body language in public life. It provides ideas of non-verbal aspects of meaning-making in public figures. The study can be of practical value for public figures, politicians and women leaders to increase their awareness of non-verbal and behavioural patterns, body image and expressions of body movements, mimics and gestures for self-development and individual growth.

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