

Political Psychology Applied to the Inaugural Address of Chilean President Michelle Bachelet

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Abstract

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet stands as a representative of Chile's progress from a dictatorship to a democracy. Her inaugural address delivered on March 11, 2006 can be analyzed using the principals of political psychology introduced by Harold D. Lasswell. The speech also demonstrates elements of transformational leadership according to definitions by leadership scholars. These psychological elements along with clever implications and word choice combine to make Bachelet's inaugural address a unique example of powerful speechwriting.

Introduction

Michelle Bachelet assumed her position as President of Chile only 16 years after the reestablishment of democracy following 17 years of repressive dictatorship. She was greeted by daunting expectations and challenges, having defeated the center-right candidate in a close election to win the presidency and did not hold the support of a clear majority of Chilean voters. Plus, Bachelet replaced extremely popular President Ricardo Lagos, thereby taking on the challenging task of winning over the populace to the same extent. These combined influences placed heavy pressure on Bachelet to begin her presidency with a strong demonstration of her ability and commitment to lead and improve Chile. On March 10th, 2006, Bachelet delivered an inaugural speech of magnificent quality that proved her strong capacity to lead the nation. The Chilean President's inaugural address (included in full text in the appendix) is an example of how a leader can use political rhetoric to emphasize unity and to navigate through emotionally charged themes. The power of Bachelet's words is revealed through the responses that they provoke in the subconscious elements of her listeners' personalities. The address is of such an inspirational nature that it exhibits elements of transformational leadership.

Challenges in Delivering the Inaugural Address

Several daunting challenges awaited Bachelet as she set out to deliver her introduction to the nation. The records of success left by previous Presidents Lagos, Frei, and Aylwin had instilled high expectations for Bachelet among Chilean constituents and the international community. Although great accomplishments had been made in healing Chile from the abuses the populace endured at the hands of the Pinochet administration, further improvements were nonetheless necessary to fully confront the lingering effects of the crimes. Also, socio-economic challenges confronted Bachelet as she took office, including the wide disparity between Chile's rich and poor communities, and lack of domestic cohesion among domestic groups. The following essay will use insight from political psychology to describe how Bachelet deftly illustrates her intentions to meet all of the present challenges while paying special attention to underscore the steps that she will take to improve domestic cohesion among fragmented groups of Chileans.

Literature Review in Political Psychology

According to William Ascher and Barbara Hirschfelder-Ascher, Harold D. Lasswell "was unquestionably the dominant figure in developing political psychology in mid-20th-century America."¹ Lasswell combined his training in European psychoanalysis with "pragmatist social science in America" in his seminal article, "The Triple-Appeal Principle," (Lasswell 1932) in which he discusses how political decisions and opinions are created through subconscious reactions and political symbolism. "The Triple-Appeal Principle," posits that political speech can mobilize Freud's three components of personality: the id, ego, and superego. Freud theorized that personality is comprised by the id (raw impulse), ego (reason), super-ego (conscience), and that these three structures are behind mental processes and can be observed in individuals' actions. Lasswell's psychoanalytic interpretation rests on the process in which symbols evoked by politicians' words can trigger mental reactions in specific realms of listeners' personalities. In another of Lasswell's texts, *Power and Society* (1950), he makes the "key insight" that "symbols evoke multiple and varying associations."² This contention explains that propaganda is then the field of "manipulative efforts" to trigger intended unconscious reactions.³ Michelle Bachelet's inaugural address is rife with deftly crafted political symbols that convey her intended messages without explicit mention. These symbols can best be interpreted through Lasswell's technique of tripartite-personality analysis to understand which part or parts of the personality are mobilized by specific symbols.

Another important area of political psychology that is useful for studying Bachelet's speech is that of transformational leadership. German Sociologist Max Weber performed the first study on the influence of personal charisma in politics at the beginning of the 20th century. James M. Burns introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his work *Leadership* (1978), and Robert House issued the theory of charismatic leadership in 1976.⁴ Bernard M. Bass combined the theories of Burns and House and presented a measurable definition of transformational leadership in *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (1985). Along with Bruce J. Avolio, Bass created a manner of quantifying the presence of transformational qualities in leaders, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 2000). Other methods of measuring transformational leadership include analyzing diaries and interviews as well as

other observational and “pencil-and-paper methods.”⁵ Another Leadership scholar, Jay Conger, has also contributed in the effort to further understand transformational qualities in leaders by modeling the behavioral dimensions of charismatic leadership as described in “Charismatic Leadership in Organizations: Perceived Behavioral Attributes and their Measurement” (Conger and Kanungo 1987).⁶

Burns, Bass, Riggio, and Conger have each published significant works in the field of transformational leadership. Although these scholars may differ slightly in their precise definition of transformational leadership, the various models of transformational leadership each include these central characteristics: being a positive role model, inspiring followers and creating a larger mission, of which they can feel a part, stimulating followers, and acknowledging the contributions that followers make. Bass and Riggio’s book *Transformational Leadership* (2006) offers the most precise description of the components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.⁷ This is the primary definition of transformational leadership that I will employ in my discussion of Bachelet’s address.

A general’s daughter who suffered under Pinochet and returned from exile to Chile to become a physician and later a leading government official, Bachelet serves as a national role model and proof of Chile’s progress from dictatorship to democracy. In her speech, Bachelet describes the national mission of “building a unique society where Chileans work together toward a common dream with room for everyone, an inclusive nation where no one feels as though their destiny is ignored.”¹⁸ The President holds this goal as a widespread objective that must be accomplished through hard work by all members of Chilean society and not as solely a goal of her administration. The language and ambitions of Bachelet’s speech demonstrate that she is a transformational leader according to the definitions of this trait posed by the aforementioned political scientists and psychologists.

Why is it Important to Study Political Psychology in Speeches?

Lasswell argued that assuming individuals act only on conscious drives and rationality gives an incomplete understanding of the full spectrum of effects upon the individual caused by political rhetoric.⁹ Freud demonstrated the significant effects upon personal behavior that result from the unconscious influences of the tripartite personality, and Lasswell further explained how these influences are manifested in reactions to political speech. Individuals hold strong opinions about their leaders and their leaders’ ideas that shape history, and analysis of political rhetoric can reveal the hidden effects of the subconscious upon individuals’ political opinions. In this particular instance, examining the psychological forces at play behind Bachelet’s speech could lead to a greater understanding of the political potency of her speech.

Michelle Bachelet’s Background

ⁱ This quotation and following quotations from Michelle Bachelet’s inaugural address have been translated by the author.

Since the removal of military dictator Augusto Pinochet by plebiscite in 1989, Chile has managed to form a successful democracy built on solid republican foundations and domestic tranquility. One of the more socially conservative nations in Latin America, Chile has elected four presidents since Pinochet officially stepped down 1990. In a seeming break from its heritage of patriarchy, Chile chose to be the first nation in South America to elect a female president when Chilean voters selected Michelle Bachelet to take this post in 2006.

Bachelet's character and past are symbolic of the nation that she governs. Since the war of liberation of Chile from Spanish rule that ended in 1818, the armed forces have played a central role in Chilean society, and President Bachelet hails from this lineage. Her father was a brigadier general in the Chilean air force when Pinochet's forces overthrew President Salvador Allende's administration by bombing la Moneda palace in Santiago. General Alberto Bachelet Martinez refused exile and died in a junta-run torture center, while his wife and daughter Michelle passed through similar centers. Prior to the coup in 1973, Bachelet grew up on a series of air force bases and then after suffering torture at the hand of Pinochet's secret police, she was exiled to Australia. Having started a medical degree at la Universidad de Chile in 1970, Bachelet returned to Chile in 1979 and completed her medical degree in 1982. Helping those in pain had always been a driving goal of the young pediatrician and she began working to aid children who had been tortured during the early stages of Pinochet's rule. Bachelet completed her education by studying civil-military relations at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. These two influences in Bachelet's life, the military heritage of Chile and her dedication to help those oppressed by the Chilean military are visible in her inaugural speech.

Bachelet hails from el Partido Social (Socialist Party) and defeated prominent right-wing candidates Sebastián Piñera and Joaquín Lavín in the 2006 presidential election. Although there exists a palpable sense of universal respect and admiration for Bachelet in Chile currently, she won the 2006 election by a narrow margin and has never maintained a job approval rating above 65%.

Bachelet's Inauguration Speech

Michelle Bachelet delivered her inaugural address on March 11, 2006 at the Chilean congress building in Valparaíso, Chile to a crowd of several hundred supporters and foreign dignitaries. Although widely respected for her humanitarian work and service as Health Minister and Defense Minister under President Ricardo Lagos, Bachelet only won a narrow victory over moderate-conservative opponent Sebastian Piñera.

Great challenges confronted Bachelet as she prepared to give her inaugural address. She was replacing a highly popular outgoing leader whose level of approval would be difficult to match, her socialist political affiliation left some Chileans uneasy about her policies with regard to business, and pressing issues such as inequality and disunity threatened Chile's ability to forge ahead in the 21st century. In her short speech, Bachelet demonstrated her capacity and intentions to overcome the issues that threatened Chile and to deftly navigate emotionally charged issues through the use of clever language and symbolism. The President's speech is an exemplary work of social inclusion and optimism. Bachelet repeatedly discusses the identities of Chileans as one

cohesive group of people but her tone is neither nationalistic nor critical of any foreign or domestic entity. She deftly maneuvers the divisions in Chilean society that continue to exist from the decades of military rule, carefully condemning the crimes committed, championing the efforts of the nation to shed the dictatorship and adopt a functioning democracy, and acknowledging the continued importance of the military in Chilean society. Simply put, her speech is an impressive example of political rhetoric that gives listeners a positive outlook on Chile's future, bonds Chileans together in a manner that minimizes partisan disputes, and provides a vision of the progress that the nation still needs to make. The most impressive part of these multiple meanings is that Bachelet layers the messages and elicits comprehension from her audience of subtle meanings through implication and symbolism.

Bachelet's speech seems to contain exactly the right words to imply a position on an issue and to simultaneously acknowledge the opposing viewpoint. Although she does not refer directly to the atrocities committed by Pinochet's agents during the 1970s and 1980s, she alludes to these crimes and the years when Chileans lived under fear of abduction and torture by the military. Bachelet states vaguely that during the recent "sixteen years of democracy," Chileans "have worked together to smooth over the divisions of the nation's past"¹⁰ instead of explicitly mentioning acts of oppression committed by Pinochet. A study of political psychological principles reveals the specific applications of psychology that Bachelet employs to appeal to her constituency in this first address upon her election. Bachelet both implicitly and explicitly details the social reforms that she has planned for overcoming the challenges posed by stark socio-economic inequality and lack of domestic cohesion. She first announces the lofty goal of working towards "a future that is more prosperous, just, equal, and inclusive" and then elaborates with initiatives benefitting the elderly, workers, students, and women.¹¹ A Lasswellian psychoanalytic study based of the language used by Bachelet to convey her ambitions for her presidency and for the future of her country helps understand the impact of her words upon her listeners and therefore better understand the significance of her speech.

Bachelet's Treatment of Controversial Topics

In Bachelet's deft maneuvering around emotionally charged political themes she manages to both express opinions on divisive issues and to maintain apparent objectivity. The true power of Bachelet's speech lays in the syntax and symbolism that she employs to avoid negative reactions to the positions that she presents on divisive issues. She frames her arguments of specific policy agendas in terms of the ideal outcome for Chileans. For instance, Bachelet argues that decreasing socio-economic inequality is in the best interest of the nation at large despite the fact that this policy involves politically unpopular redistribution of wealth. Bachelet possesses a heritage and resume that qualify her to speak authoritatively on powerfully divisive topics over which Chilean political parties often spar. The most important of these is the discussion of egregious crimes committed by the police and military under Pinochet's rule. Although Bachelet only refers to these abuses in ambiguous terms, her followers understand the references that she makes due to the painful national history that they endured. When Bachelet says "the past is what it is: the past, and we will never forget it" she is making the subtle, but very powerful, point that Chile has survived the murderous rule of Pinochet and ought to focus on its future. On the other hand, the sentence (and several others like it in the speech) implicitly state that the crimes committed by the junta ought not to be forgotten or forgiven.¹² Bachelet's history of activism

against the military regime as well as work to aid victims of torture can extend the significance of the sentence further to mean that she will fight for reparations for victims as well as deserved punishment for guilty parties.

In another symbolic reference to the necessity of healing wounds inflicted by the junta, Bachelet gives a special acknowledgement to departing President Ricardo Lagos, telling the audience to give an extra applause to the departing President “for the great feat that he accomplished.”¹³ The “great feat” to which Bachelet refers is implicit praise of Lagos’s work in publishing the Valech Report on human rights abuses committed during Pinochet’s rule. The Valech Report, also called the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, was compiled at the request of President Lagos and includes the most complete records of human rights abuses committed by the Chilean military and police during the dictatorship. Lagos gave a formal, tear-filled apology to the Chilean public for the past crimes of the Chilean government under Pinochet. Lagos’s administration also arranged for victims of torture under the dictatorship to receive a small monthly stipend which serves as a symbolic reparation for the abuses committed against them.

In contrast, Bachelet’s clever syntax reveals that she understands the importance of refraining from outright (although deserved) criticism of the military or right wing supporters of Pinochet’s administration in order to preserve political cooperation and achieve her progressive agendas. Bachelet addresses Chile’s painful past and points out that, while these crimes are unforgettable, they are not part of the nation’s future. She makes a fascinating juxtaposition between the continuing cultural importance of the Chilean armed forces and the need to remember the abuses committed by the military under Pinochet when discussing the death of her father. In an extremely clever use of speech, Bachelet mentions the approaching anniversary of her father’s murder by his fellow members of the armed forces because he refused to support the coup d’état or to assume exile. Bachelet declares that thirty two years earlier her father (an air force general) died and her listeners understand that he was murdered for not supporting the military junta. Bachelet then states that “in memory of my father, General Bachelet, I want to salute the armed forces, which represent the Order and Security of Chile, which are an important part of Chilean history and to this day remain the heritage of all Chileans.”¹⁴ The word that Bachelet uses for heritage, *patrimonio*, can also be understood in this context as implying that the armed forces are servants of all Chileans. The phrasing of Bachelet’s salute to the armed forces contains layers of implied (though impactful) messages that allude to the crimes committed by the military during the dictatorship and point out that instead of serving and protecting the populace, the military actively oppressed it. In this simple statement, Bachelet conveys the loaded message that she is part of a military legacy, the military of Chile committed capital crimes against her and her family, the military under Pinochet assumed a role contrary to its traditional position in Chilean society, and that the nation still accepts the military as an central part of Chilean society as the guarantor of order and security. Bachelet’s statements about the Chilean military and her gratitude to outgoing President Ricardo Lagos contain implications easily understood by her followers who have firsthand knowledge of Chile’s recent turmoil.

Political Symbolism and Subconscious Elements in Bachelet’s Inaugural Address

Bachelet's speech conveys layers of meanings through symbolism interpretable by her audience. The symbolic multiple meanings created through clever word choice mentioned earlier give the speech an impressively opinionated and yet objective tone on emotionally charged issues. A psychodynamic analysis using Lasswell's principles help to understand the manner in which specific elements of the speech may be interpreted by her listeners.

She expresses great care and hope for Chile during her presidential term and aspires to mold the nation into a more cohesive and prosperous society. The majority of the language used by Bachelet in her speech is attributable to the influences of ego and superego as she explains logically her ambitions and plans for improving the social and economic climate of Chile and expresses conscience in her altruistic drive to enact lasting changes for the better. A few instances of political symbolism demonstrate the influences of Bachelet's ego and superego in framing the words of her speech. Bachelet opens the historical discussion of her speech by reflecting that "there was a time when we were divided among one another. We watched each other with mistrust and suspicion." This is a powerfully symbolic statement that clearly refers to the days of Pinochet's rule when secret agents infiltrated the Chilean populace in search of potential leftist dissenters. Political espionage has long plagued Chilean politics and has stifled public expressions of political sentiment for fear of retribution, and Bachelet believes that the reinstatement of liberal democracy has erased the need for political paranoia. The statement also makes it clear that Bachelet believes that these days of division are over in Chile, and that the country ought to distance itself from that history. She makes repeated and indirect references to the dictatorship's place in Chilean history and each time implies that these events ought to be remembered, but ought not to dominate political discussion. Bachelet declares that Chileans have cured themselves of this pervasive fear, commenting that they have "reached the moment when we look at each other face to face without resentment or suspicion," but then quotes outgoing president Ricardo Lagos that "there is no tomorrow without yesterday" and "we don't want to make the same errors of the past." Her choice to maintain the egregious human rights abuses in the past yet not to continuously mention them explicitly displays great restraint and fortitude to Bachelet's listeners as it is commonly known that she endured torture at the hands of the government. She contends that the past is confined to the past; the crimes committed under Pinochet ought not to continue to dampen the nation's political outlook.

Although Bachelet's speech lacks explicit mention of plans that she intends to enact to realize the visions from her speech, Bachelet expresses ego through the logic with which she structures her deft phraseology and political rhetoric. For instance, in all of the instances in which she condemns the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship, Bachelet chooses her words very carefully as not to directly mention the crimes or perpetrators. She knows that explicit mention of the crimes and the soldiers and police responsible could elicit a political backlash from conservative politicians. Although Bachelet's personal experiences in the junta-run torture centers and her work to aid other individuals oppressed by Pinochet reveal her disgust and condemnation of the dictatorship, she displays ego in the rational decision to limit her criticism of these events in order to maintain political cohesion. Political harmony at the expense of deserved outright castigation of the junta is a rational response indicative of the ego portion of Bachelet's tripartite personality.

However, to a larger extent, the main element of the tripartite personality displayed by Bachelet is superego, as she exhibits altruism in her aim to help her constituents. Bachelet honestly reflects that she “never had the ambition of power, only the will to serve.” This sentiment is confirmed in statements by her three predecessors that she only seeks to serve her nation and not to rule it. Bachelet also makes repeated mention that her main objective during her presidential term is to decrease economic inequality in Chile, further demonstrating the influence of conscience and altruism in Bachelet’s speech. Although ego and superego play prominent and discernable roles in Bachelet’s inaugural address, influences of id are not discernable in Bachelet’s words.

The Triple-Appeal Principle as Seen in the Reactions of Three Previous Presidents

Although Bachelet boasts an impressive political career, the reactions to Bachelet’s leadership and character by her three most recent predecessors are not based strictly on such qualifications alone. In absence of testimonies in reaction to Bachelet’s address by normal listeners that could be scanned for unconscious tripartite influences, messages to Bachelet by her three predecessors reveal unconscious reasoning in support of Bachelet’s election. These personal messages to Bachelet upon her assumption of the executive office are not direct reactions to her speech, but rather letters that express the same kinds of responses by the id, ego, and superego to Bachelet’s character, history, and intended policies. The weekly magazine *El Sábado* (Saturday) published by *El Mercurio*, the most prestigious Chilean newspaper, printed personal reactions to Bachelet’s inauguration by Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Table, and Ricardo Lagos. I will analyze and discuss each former president’s article in reaction to Bachelet’s inauguration with respect to Lasswell’s Triple-Appeal Principle. The statements in these articles contain both words directed towards Bachelet and reflections on the fact of her appointment. While the influences of ego and superego are more discernable than are those of the id in the former presidents’ passages, each component of the tripartite principle forms a part of their consideration of Bachelet’s leadership.

Patricio Aylwin, the first president following the end of Pinochet’s dictatorship in 1990, Aylwin reflects with nostalgia on Bachelet’s generation as “the moment of greatest idealism in our political lives, when we all wanted to change the world and recreate it.” Aylwin considers that Chile (and the world in general) has lost the idealistic sentiments of earlier generations and hopes that Bachelet’s presidency will reignite some of the revolutionary spark that he believes Chileans have lost. He laments the dominance of conformity and complacency in Chilean society at the expense of the disappearance of idealism. He values the sense of idealism currently absent among Chileans and considers it beneficial to the nation that Bachelet might restore this enthusiasm for change. These comments are expressions of superego (conscience) on the part of Aylwin and not of ego (reason).

Aylwin’s article later shows signs of ego as well due to the logical reasoning that he displays in other discussions of Bachelet’s qualifications. Aylwin comments on the strides made in public healthcare by Bachelet during her tenure as Health Minister recognizing Bachelet’s efforts to emphasize community service in her speeches and service under Lagos. Aylwin equates Bachelet with his own daughter because they are both of the generation that came of age during the idealistic age before the coup d’état when Pinochet took power. This sentence implies the id impulse towards fatherly and familial feelings for Bachelet, but otherwise the article is devoid of

the influence of impulse. He expresses a desire to protect Bachelet's idealistic exuberance left over from her youth in an id-like display of affection.

Eduardo Frei writes a substantially similar missive to Bachelet found in *El Sábado* but with a much different tone than that of Aylwin. Frei reminds Bachelet to maintain her own views in the face of contrary popular opinion, consult experts for advice, appoint the individuals that she considers most qualified to key posts, imagine a perfect state of life in Chile and think about how to reach it, and to build an administrative team that she trusts. Frei's statements and suggestions on pushing Bachelet to dream about a perfect status in Chile and how to reach that it reflect both ego and superego on the part of Frei. They display reasoning to help Bachelet carry out her presidency in the manner that she sees fit as well as conscience expressed as a hope that Bachelet will maintain her individualism during her presidential term. He identifies with her and hopes that she will maintain her humanity while in office. These considerations are indicative of the influences of superego, ego, and id on the part of ex-President Frei.

Ricardo Lagos was the closest to Bachelet both in terms of timing and professional relations when Bachelet took office in 2006. Although she alludes to the strides accomplished by each of her three predecessors, Bachelet gives a special mention to Lagos for his accomplishments in investigating human rights abuses during the Pinochet dictatorship and for his public service programs. In his message to Bachelet in *El Sábado*, Lagos describes her as the most important symbol of cultural change that Chile has seen since the dismantling of the dictatorship in 1990. Having worked with Bachelet throughout his term as president, Lagos knows that her leadership style will be significantly different from that of the men that preceded her. The reflection on the positive social changes that Chile was enjoying as represented by the election of Bachelet to the country's highest office as well as the discussion of the beneficial changes that she will make are indicative of the influence of Lagos's superego as well as ego. He expresses both logic and conscience in reflecting on the significance of Bachelet's arrival at the station of president of Chile. Lagos demonstrates conscience in aspiring towards a more progressive and tolerant nation and ego in arguing that Bachelet is the instrument of change that will help Chile to reach these goals.

Bachelet as a Transformational Leader

According to *Transformational Leadership* by Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, the structure of transformational leadership is built upon four events that can be observed between leaders and followers: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized Influence occurs when followers see the leader as a positive role-model who promises that obstacles will be overcome, and "the leaders are admired, respected, and trusted."¹⁵ In an article published in *El Mercurio*, following Bachelet's election outgoing President Ricardo Lagos described that Bachelet will "unite ability with feeling and intelligence and reason with heart."¹⁶ She displays clear optimism for the future and identifies the general obstacles that Chile will strive to overcome, among which are improving care for senior citizens, improving primary education for children, and decreasing income inequality.

Bachelet likewise exhibits the characteristics of Inspirational Motivation by emphasizing unity and common goals among all segments of Chilean society. Even though she presents the

challenges that her administration will face, Bachelet issues “a promise” to incorporate “all regions” in the effort to aid marginalized groups and individuals in Chile.¹⁷ She also declares that her populace “has prepared for a great challenge” and will succeed in accomplishing the societal improvements that she describes.¹⁸ Similar to her ambition to improve the condition of specific groups, Bachelet aims to achieve Intellectual Stimulation among her followers. She accomplishes this by challenging listeners to consider the overarching societal challenges that the nation faces, specifically “individualism, apathy, and despair” as well as more specific initiatives, such as embracing and benefitting from the technological revolution. She pushes her followers to question the status quo in the realms that she finds most prescient and important: wealth distribution, individual duty to the state, status of public education, and other areas.

Bachelet displays Individual Consideration in her speech, commenting on the need to remember and take care of elderly and disabled Chileans as well as historically repressed minority groups. A member of the Socialist Party, Bachelet considers the support for all Chileans to be a centerpiece of her campaign, placing employment, social security, and education reform as key initiatives in her 100 Days Program upon taking office.¹⁹ Among these provisions were the allocation of funds to aid “minimum pension earners,” establishment of an “old age pension,” and creation of rules against workplace discrimination.²⁰

The individual words used in Bachelet’s inauguration address are indicative of transformational leadership as well. In a study by Charles Salter et al. titled “Do Transformational Leaders Speak Differently?” on survey responses by business executives, content analysis highlights the specific words used most often and less often by transformational leaders.²¹ Salter and his colleagues compile these words into categories which can be used to identify similar language in President Bachelet’s address. With the exception of certain English phrases that do not translate neatly from Spanish, many of the same terms indicative of transformational leaders are present in the speech. There are thirty three total uses of the words chosen by Salter et al. as terms used most often by transformational leaders. Most importantly, Bachelet repeatedly addresses her listeners as friends and compatriots, alludes to an optimistic vision of Chile’s future, and emphasizes the nation’s ability to overcome challenges through dedication and character.

Leadership scholars Burns, Bass, Riggio, and Conger differ slightly in their definitions of what specific actions or characteristics constitute transformational leadership, but each scholar agrees that transformational leaders display visionary qualities. Bachelet’s character in itself is evidence of new vision for Chile. As the first female president in South America and before that the first female defense minister, she displays the fortitude to overcome discrimination that has long existed in Chile’s patriarchal culture. Bachelet also clearly expresses her vision of improving Chile for the better by decreasing inequality and best preparing Chile to excel in its current trials. She highlights the progress that Chile has made since the switch from Pinochet’s reign to a successful democracy in 1990, stating that the country has “reached the moment when we look at each other, face to face, without resentment or suspicion” despite the widespread human rights abuses during the 1970s and 1980s.²² In various terms throughout her speech, Bachelet displays her visionary qualities of transformational leadership when she promises “a tomorrow that is more prosperous, just, egalitarian, and participatory.”²³

Conclusion

During Bachelet's first three months as chief executive, she accomplished many of the important initiatives that she outlined in her inauguration speech. The most notable highlights of her early success were presidential decrees to provide free healthcare to senior citizens, social security reform, and electoral reform. However, incidents outside Bachelet's control, including riots in schools, a transportation fiasco, and an earthquake in Southern Chile contributed to her low approval rating. The beginning of Bachelet's term has been surprisingly difficult and the outlooks for the 2010 presidential election predict that conservative candidate Sebastian Piñera will be elected. However, the changes enacted by Bachelet during the beginning of her term are lasting changes and reflect the fruition of goals that she laid forth in her inaugural address. The address is a marvelous work of political rhetoric and displays the versatile power of well-chosen words to implicitly and explicitly convey her intended meanings and opinions. She frames controversial, emotionally charged issues and convictions in language that neutralizes the possibility of negative reactions from opponents. Bachelet's terms in this speech are carefully chosen to elicit certain responses from her listeners, and psychodynamic analysis of Bachelet's words using Lasswell's Triple-Appeal Principle reveals the unconscious responses that the address provokes through uses of symbolism. Bachelet's inaugural address demonstrates the requisite characteristics of transformational leadership, and her election and service as president will undoubtedly represent a lasting positive change in Chile's history.

Appendix.

Full Text of Bachelet Inauguration Speech Delivered on March 11, 2006.

Gracias, chilenas y chilenos:

Gracias por estos aplausos, gracias por esas sonrisas que me regalan en todo momento, gracias por los abrazos. Me siento privilegiada, de verdad, de recibir y sentir de parte de ustedes tanto cariño.

Quiero dirigir mis palabras a todas y todos los chilenos y chilenas, sin exclusión.

Hubo tiempos de nuestra historia en que nos dividimos entre unos y otros. Nos mirábamos con recelo, suspicacia, soberbia.

En estos dieciséis años de democracia hemos trabajado juntos para limar las asperezas de una sociedad dividida, de una sociedad que nos separaba entre los aquellos y los nuestros. Es el momento que todos nos sintamos de los nuestros.

Hoy soplan vientos distintos, hemos sido capaces de construir una sociedad distinta, donde nos une el noble y común deseo de un futuro mejor para todas y todos en nuestra patria, un futuro donde caben todos, una patria inclusiva, donde ninguna diversidad esté afuera, donde nadie sienta que su destino está a la intemperie.

Nos hemos preparado para un gran desafío. El siglo XXI nos plantea nuevas tareas, tal vez desconocidas hasta ahora. Más allá de la revolución tecnológica que está ante nuestros ojos y al alcance, pienso también en cómo nos relacionamos entre nosotros, cómo interactuamos en comunidad y vencemos el individualismo, la indiferencia y la desesperanza. Ha llegado el momento en que nos miremos unos a otros, cara a cara, sin resquemores ni suspicacias.

El pasado es lo que es: pasado, y no lo olvidaremos nunca. Porque como dijera el Presidente Lagos, "no hay mañana sin ayer", y no queremos repetir los mismos errores del pasado. Y queremos un mañana, un mañana más próspero, más justo, más igualitario, más participativo.

Sabemos que en cuatro años no vamos a resolver todos los problemas, nunca estuvo tampoco en mi discurso de campaña, pero vamos a dar un paso adelante, un gran paso adelante.

Será el Gobierno de los ciudadanos, desde los postergados hasta los emprendedores, esa infinita gama de colores, de percepciones y miradas que dan tanta riqueza a nuestra sociedad. Esa ciudadanía, ustedes, tendrán en mí una mandataria que les hablará siempre con el lenguaje de la verdad.

Surgirán dificultades, sin duda, todo gobierno las tiene. "Las campañas, como decía un gran pensador, se hacen en poesía, pero los gobiernos se hacen en prosa".

Aún así, con todas las dificultades que pueda haber, la relación entre ustedes y nosotros, y la que habla, no se verá afectada, porque quiero establecer un diálogo basado en la franqueza y la participación, un gran pacto entre la ciudadanía y los gobernantes.

Ustedes lo saben, yo cumplo mis compromisos. Diré lo que pienso y haré lo que digo. ¡Palabra de mujer!

En nuestro empeño por lograr avanzar hacia un Chile cada día mejor para cada uno de nuestros habitantes, quiero sumar todas las voluntades, las voluntades ciudadanas, las voluntades en el Parlamento, Parlamento que es la expresión de la legitimidad de nuestras leyes. Y con todos ellos vamos a trabajar por un ideal compartido, cual es el bienestar de los chilenos y la justicia en toda nuestra patria. Y espero contar, para ese noble fin, con el apoyo de todas las parlamentarias y parlamentarios.

Nuestros afanes estarán puestos en nuestros niños, como aquellos niños que me recibieron cuando entré a esta Moneda por la Plaza de la Ciudadanía, para que nuestros niños puedan aprender y desarrollarse desde pequeños y eliminemos todo rastro de desigualdad en nuestro país.

Nuestros afanes estarán en nuestros viejos queridos, en nuestros adultos mayores, para recompensarles con todo lo que han entregado a nuestro país.

Nuestros esfuerzos estarán en todos aquellos que aspiran a un trabajo, pero como dije en la campaña, no a cualquier tipo de trabajo, sino a un trabajo digno y decente, porque los trabajadores de nuestra patria sí se lo merecen.

Nuestro apoyo con esos jóvenes llenos de talento, que quieren ir a la universidad o al instituto, que quieren emprender, que quieren forjar su propio destino. Son nuestro futuro, son nuestro presente y nuestro futuro, y los vamos a apoyar con mucha fuerza.

Nuestras fuerzas estarán con las mujeres, porque las mujeres así lo merecemos.

Estarán también con los pueblos originarios de nuestro país.

Estarán también nuestras fuerzas con las personas que poseen alguna discapacidad.

El Estado debe estar al servicio de quienes sufren la amargura de la indefensión y al lado de los que quieren surgir.

En Chile no habrá ciudadanos olvidados. Ese es mi compromiso. Estaremos activamente en las regiones. No habrá un pueblo o localidad que no reciba nuestra preocupación.

Y es por eso que mi primera actividad en el camino, desde Valparaíso acá, fue ir a Casablanca, una comuna en una región, porque quiero que Chile seamos todos y que las regiones también tengan el rol y la relevancia que se merecen.

Y si no es así, chilenos y chilenas, pueden cobrarme la palabra.

Ustedes lo saben: yo nunca tuve la ambición de poder. Sólo he tenido la voluntad de servir. El cargo que asumo hoy me lo han dado ustedes, y siento el peso de la responsabilidad que eso significa.

Todos los chilenos y chilenas, todos los chilenos y chilenas están en mi mente y en mi corazón en este momento, como todos aquellos que estaban a lo largo de toda la entrada de Santiago. Gracias a todos ellos, por el tremendo afecto, apoyo. Vuelvo a insistir, tengo clara la responsabilidad que significa tener en mis hombros las esperanzas, los anhelos y el cariño de tantos, y voy a trabajar muy fuerte para responder a esas expectativas y a esas esperanzas.

Conozco muy bien la realidad de mi país, lo he recorrido tantas veces. Me han abierto las puertas de las casas y de los corazones a lo largo de todo Chile. Sé de las precariedades y las desigualdades. Sé también de éxitos invaluable, como nuestros premios Nobel, artistas y creadores que han forjado nuestra cultura; el tesón de nuestros deportistas; el trabajo y el mérito de nuestros profesionales y trabajadores, que son la fuerza de nuestra tierra.

Pienso en tantas y tantos que han sabido surgir ante la adversidad con gran empeño.

Todos, en nuestra larga, larga geografía, serán el eje de mi gobierno.

Amigas y amigos:

Este es un momento muy solemne para el país. Les pido que volteen sus cabezas y miren las figuras de los ilustres ciudadanos que adornan esta plaza. Es la República, amigas y amigos, esa es la República. Allá en frente está Diego Portales y el símbolo de una República naciente, pequeña, modesta en aquella época, pero pujante, amante del orden, que aprendió a resolver por medio de la ley y no de las armas.

Están también en esta plaza Jorge Alessandri, Salvador Allende y Eduardo Frei Montalva. Un homenaje para todos ellos, que simbolizan nuestra patria moderna, el país del siglo XX, nuestra vocación democrática y una época de progreso y avance social.

Soy depositaria de toda una historia, que tuvo momentos grises y amargos, pero que ha sabido recuperarse. Los chilenos hoy vivimos mejor y más libres que antes. Hemos tenido tres gobiernos exitosos. Me siento orgullosa, orgullosa de continuar una senda que tantos frutos ha dado.

Mi saludo y cariño para el Presidente Patricio Aylwin; mi saludo y cariño para el Presidente Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle.

El Chile que construimos hoy se asienta en las bases que ellos construyeron ayer.

Quiero en este momento no sólo expresar mi admiración, mi cariño, sino también mi gratitud especial con un gran Presidente de la República, Ricardo Lagos Escobar.

Qué gran orgullo, qué gran orgullo sentimos todos los chilenos hoy al verlo salir de este Palacio, ovacionado por su pueblo. ¡Sí, amigas y amigos, aplaudan más fuerte, porque Ricardo Lagos Escobar se lo merece, y porque cuando aplaudimos a este gran Presidente, que cumplió tan bien su tarea, también estamos aplaudiendo a toda la República!

Finalmente, hay un homenaje que no puedo dejar de hacer. Un día 12 de marzo, hace 32 años, a los 50 años de edad, falleció mi padre, Alberto Bachelet Martínez. Mañana estaré junto a él, pero sé que él está aquí conmigo, como lo dijera la noche del triunfo.

En el recuerdo de mi padre, general Bachelet, quiero saludar a las Fuerzas armadas, de Orden y Seguridad de Chile, que son parte importante de nuestra historia, y que hoy día son patrimonio de todos los chilenos.

Amigas y amigos:

Seguiremos trabajando para hacer de nuestro país uno más desarrollado, con más justicia y mayores oportunidades.

El mundo nos está mirando. El mundo observa con atención la experiencia de este pequeño país al sur del planeta, que supo reconquistar con fuerza, con dolor, pero con fuerza, las libertades y los derechos, que supo construir una democracia sólida, que supo reencontrarse y que progresa, que ha sabido sacar a millones de compatriotas de la pobreza, en libertad y dignidad.

Este pequeño país, que lo sepan las ilustres visitas que nos acompañan, hoy quiere dar un gran paso en la historia, un paso de prosperidad para todos sus hijos, pero también una nueva forma de ver y hacer la política, una política más inclusiva, más participativa, más abierta, más transparente. Una política por, para y con los ciudadanos.

Chilenas y chilenos:

Sé muy bien que hay muchas necesidades insatisfechas. Conozco los justos anhelos que hay en cada familia. Quiero abocar mi experiencia, mi sensibilidad y mi esfuerzo a la hermosa labor de conducir el país hacia un destino mejor. Eso es lo que quiero para Chile, y sé que juntos lo podemos lograr.

Hoy día Chile cuenta con un nuevo gobierno, dirigido por una mujer, que es expresión también de nuevos tiempos, tiempos de alegría, tiempo de hombres también, tiempo de jóvenes y de niños, tiempo de adultos mayores y, por cierto, tiempo de mujer.

Es tiempo de todas y todos, en ésta, mi querida patria, la patria de todas y todos los ciudadanos.

Muchas gracias, amigos y amigas, muchas gracias, porque quiero que Chile sea de todas y todos, porque quiero que Chile sea la patria que todos queremos que sea. Por eso vamos a

trabajar con fuerza, con energía, para que nuestra patria sea más justa, más humana, más solidaria, más igualitaria. Porque ese es el sueño que todos los que estamos aquí compartimos, ese es el sueño que recorre nuestro país de Arica hasta la Antártica Chilena.

Y por ese sueño, yo y todo el equipo de trabajo, el gobierno a lo largo de todo Chile, vamos a trabajar sin descanso. Porque cuatro años son cortos, vamos a trabajar a toda máquina, porque juntos vamos a tener un Chile mucho mejor.

Así que, amigos, vamos a seguir trabajando, porque queremos que niños y niñas, hombres y mujeres, puedan tener un presente y un futuro mejor.

A celebrar, porque vamos a seguir avanzando en nuestro país, a celebrar para que mujeres y hombres tengamos abiertas las grandes Alamedas.

¡Viva Chile!

¹ Ascher, William and Hirschfelder-Ascher, Barbara, *Revitalizing Political Psychology: the Legacy of Harold D. Lasswell*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Mahwah, NJ, September 2004. p.xi

² Ascher and Hirschfelder-Ascher, p.40.

³ Ibid, 40.

⁴ Bass, Bernard, M. and Riggio, Ronald E. *Transformational Leadership: 2nd Edition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Mahwah, NJ, October 2005. p.xi

⁵ Bass and Riggio, p.28.

⁶ Conger, Jay A. and Kanungo, Rabindra N, "Charismatic Leadership in Organizations: Perceived Behavioral Attributes and their Measurement," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 15, No. 5. (September, 1994), pp. 439-452. p.439.

⁷ Bass and Riggio, p.6.

⁸ Bachelet Inaugural Address (Author's Translation).

⁹ Ascher, and Hirschfelder-Ascher, p.10-11.

¹⁰ Bachelet Inaugural Address (Author's Translation).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bachelet Inaugural Address.

¹³ Bachelet Inaugural Address (Author's Translation).

¹⁴ Bachelet Inaugural Address.

¹⁵ Bass, Bernard M. and Riggio, Ronald E. *Transformational Leadership : Second Edition*. Laurence Erlbaum Associates Inc. 2006. Mahwah, NJ. p.6

¹⁶ Aylwin, Patricio et al. "De Presidente a Presidenta." *El Sábado: Revistas El Mercurio*. March 11, 2006. Santiago, Chile. p.25

¹⁷ Bachelet Inaugural Address, Office of Michelle Bachelet Jeria, Government of Chile, March. 11, 2006, text of speech found at:

http://www.chileangovernment.gov.cl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=702&Itemid=5 (

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Salter, C., Carmody-Bubb, M., Duncan, P., and Green, M.T. (2007) "Do Transformational Leaders Speak differently? The Impact of Leaders' Transformational Communications in Meeting Followers' Implicit Leadership Prototypes." In N. Huber & M. Harvey (Eds.), *Leadership: Impact, Culture, and Sustainability*. James McGregor Burns Academy of Leadership. pp. 93-106.

²² Bachelet Inaugural Address.

²³ Bachelet Inaugural Address.