

Political leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in selected analytical categories

Dominika Liszkowska, *Koszalin University of Technology (Poland)*

E-mail: dominika_liszkowska@wp.pl

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6312-341X

Abstract

The aim of the article is to define the political leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and present the attributes and factors, which primarily influenced the effectiveness of his leadership in the Turkish society. Erdoğan has a strong and unquestioned position in his own party as well as on the Turkish political scene. For a significant part of the society, he is an irreplaceable person and the best leader in the history of the country. Factors which have a major influence on his success are of social, economic and cultural nature. He is a leader, who can easily turn a crisis to his own advantage and convince his followers to support his own arguments. Erdoğan's activities, which were firmly focused on economic issues, health care reforms and Turkey's integration with the European Union, enabled him to gain the support of even this part of the society whose values are distant from the ones he accepts. At the same time, he represents a confrontational attitude towards political opponents and often expresses his reluctance towards them.

Keywords: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, political leadership, leadership attributes, charismatic leadership, European Union membership, Turkey

Przywódtwo polityczne Recepta Tayyipa Erdoğan w wybranych kategoriach analitycznych

Strzeszczenie

Celem artykułu jest zdefiniowanie przywództwa politycznego Recepta Tayyipa Erdoğan, przedstawienie jego atrybutów oraz czynników, które w głównej mierze wpłynęły na skuteczność przywództwa w tureckim społeczeństwie. Erdoğan posiada silną i niekwestionowaną pozycję we własnej partii i na tureckiej scenie politycznej. Dla znacznej części społeczeństwa jest postacią niezastąpioną i najlepszym przywódcą w historii kraju. Czynniki, które w głównej mierze wpływają na sukces jego przywództwa mają charakter społeczny, ekonomiczny oraz kulturowy. Jest to przywódca, który z łatwością potrafi przekształcić kryzys w korzyść dla siebie i przekonać zwolenników do własnych racji. Działania Erdoğan mocno skoncentrowane na kwestiach gospodarczych, reformach służby zdrowia i integracji Turcji z Unią Europejską pozwoliły mu zdobyć poparcie nawet tej części społeczeństwa, której wartości odbiegają od przyjętych przez niego wartości. Jednocześnie przejawia on

konfrontacyjną postawę wobec oponentów politycznych i wyraża niechętny stosunek wobec nich.

Słowa kluczowe: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, przywództwo polityczne, atrybuty przywództwa, przywództwo charyzmatyczne, członkostwo w Unii Europejskiej, Turcja

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is a person, who permanently entered Turkish politics in the 1990s, when he served as Mayor of Istanbul. Already at the beginning of his activity, he used to evoke strong and contradictory emotions. During his term as mayor, Erdoğan allocated municipal funds to the poorer districts of the city, ensuring himself the support of lower socio-economic groups, which at the time described him as "Robin Hood" (Görener, Ucal 2011: p. 368). However, these actions were sharply criticised by a part of the society, which can be described as secular and identifying with the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Within this group, Erdoğan's policy was judged as wasteful rather than supporting the city's development.

Although in numerous statements and interviews after the creation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Erdoğan argued that this is a conservative democratic party (Goff-Taylor 2017: p. 3) and the secular constitution of Turkey is inviolable, some commentators questioned legitimacy of these words. The press quoted Ruşen Çakır, who was the author of Erdoğan's biography. He stated that the leader of AKP cannot be trusted because he has been an Islamist since he was 12 years old and he would not reveal his real roots (Szymański 2008: p. 243; Purvis 2002). A similar conclusion can be drawn by analysing Erdoğan's public statements from the 1990s, including such as the one from 21.11.1994, in which he said: "Praise God, we are for sharia" (tur. „*Elhamdülillah şeriatçiyiz*”), another from 19.12.1994: "I am against Christmas" (tur. „*Yılbaşına karşıyım*”) (see: Kazete 2001), or the one from 8.01.1995: "I am the Imam of Istanbul" (tur. „*Ben İstanbul'un imamıyım*”) (see: Hürriyet 2003). However, authors of numerous publications issued after the November 2002 Turkish general election expressed different opinions. It was believed that the party which won the election was a liberal Islamic group. Some journalists and scientists hoped that its functioning would impact the consolidation of Turkish democracy and confirm the thesis about its compliance with Islam (Szymański 2008: p. 243).

The aim of this article is to analyse and attempt to define Recep Erdoğan's political leadership and its attributes. The article consists of four parts. The first two parts are theoretical and introductory, whereas the other two are analytical. The first part of the article presents definitions and main elements of the concept of political leadership, which are necessary for the proper conducting of the research process. In the second part, the person of Recep Erdoğan is characterised in the form of a short biographical note. The third part presents factors influencing the success of Erdoğan's leadership in Turkish society. In the last part, the author tries to characterise the main attributes of Turkish president's leadership.

The research questions are the following:

- What influences the effectiveness of Erdoğan's political leadership?
- What are Erdoğan's leadership attributes?

- Can Erdoğan be called a charismatic leader?
- Why is Erdoğan a confrontational leader?

The approach used in this article is descriptive and explanatory. The study was conducted using the method of system analysis and technique of the analysis of source material and secondary analysis of quantitative and qualitative existing data. Sources which were used to prepare the article include monographs as well as scientific and internet articles.

1. Definition of the „leadership” – leadership and its attributes

According to the definition *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, leadership means “the position of being the leader of a group, organisation, country, etc.” On the other hand, a leader is a “person who leads others”. The diversity of approaches, as well as the multitude of types, dimensions and concepts make the notion of leadership broad, multidimensional and ambiguous, with hardly perceptible boundaries and identity. As Jacek Ziółkowski notes, leadership is most often treated as: personal power, personal authority, power not based on coercion or violence, informal or informally legitimised power, a special form of political influence and ability to awaken faith (religious, political or social) (Ziółkowski 2012: p. 66).

The category of “leadership”, similarly to the term of “political influence”, can be interpreted very broadly and includes both concepts of power and authority. Among definitions of the “leader”, one can therefore find different features of genetic and functional nature as well as the difference between power and leadership (Ziółkowski 2004: p. 83).

The basic attributes of leadership include: relationality (leader, supporters, character of leadership), non-obligatory nature (no coercion and physical sanctions), mobilisation and inspiration of recipients (the leader derives his strength from the ability to directly activate the recipients), informal legitimisation (the process of building recognition does not have an institutionalised character), uniting supporters (the ability to integrate), building personal bonds (leadership usually has a personal dimension which can be further expanded), goal orientation (teleological), activation, articulation of recipients' expectations (on the example of transactional model), trust between parties, evoking hope among recipients (and others) (Ziółkowski 2012: p. 67–68). In order to change people's attitudes or behaviour, the leader uses such methods as persuasion, negotiations, praising, making promises, expressing solidarity with the group, program and legal proposals (Jakubowska 2001: p. 34).

Leadership is therefore devoid of attributes such as coercion or violence and uses less invasive measures, whereas the leader does not have the option of applying negative sanctions, thus determining the further nature of the relationship. In contrast to power, leadership cannot exist without real support from supporters. Within its framework, it is the supporter that decides who to trust, who to listen and to whom be subordinate (Ziółkowski 2004: p. 83–84). An important feature that distinguishes leadership from power is also the ability to mobilize individuals who are under influence of a leader. Power is usually charac-

terised by passive subordination, whereas the leader must possess the ability to mobilize his followers. As Jerzy Sielski notes, the term 'ruler' is reserved for military leaders or rulers who exercise their rule in an authoritarian manner (Sielski 2013: p. 77–78). Accordingly, the categories of 'power' and 'leadership' should be distinguished from each other.

Leadership is defined in a slightly different way by Przemysław Żukiewicz. According to him, it is "a social process in which a social entity (citizen, group, organisation) gives support to another social entity (citizen, group, organisation), because it considers it to be, at a given moment, the closest to the social notion of the ideal of the leader and having the greatest chances of achieving specific goals accepted by both entities" (Żukiewicz 2011: p. 48). This definition seems to best reflect the essence of political leadership and, as a result, it was adopted for the purposes of this article.

The above-mentioned definitions also contains the following distinctive concepts, namely:

- processuality (Northouse) – leadership is a series of changes taking place in periods that follow each other (internal situation of Turkey in the years 2002–2019);
- prototypicality (Hogg, Reid) – leadership is a reflection of ideals that are encoded in the cognitive patterns of people belonging to a specific social group (i.e. primarily the part of Turkish society that is centered around Sunni Islam and traditions, while religion plays a key role in their conservatively defined lifestyle (Kalaycioglu 2014: p. 586);
- voluntariness (Jakubowska) – leadership is a process in which both supporters and leaders themselves are involved and are not subject to coercion or pressure (Erdoğan and his party won all subsequent elections in Turkey after 2002);
- teleological point of view (Blondel) – leadership is a process in which participants taking part in it implement their common goals (Żukiewicz 2011: p. 48–49) (e.g. Turkey's membership in the European Union (EU). Aspirations for membership in the community structures have been present in Turkey since the 1960s. Similarly, both Erdoğan at the moment of assuming the power in Turkey in 2002 (Szymański 2008: p. 15), as well as a significant part of Turkish society supported (2003 – 67%, 2004 – 71 %) (Goff-Taylor 2017: p. 4) accession of this state to EU structures – in the further part of this article this issue is discussed a bit more widely).

2. Biographical note of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was born on 26.02.1954 in Istanbul, however his family comes from Rize, a city in the Black Sea region. In 1965, he graduated from the Kasımpaşa Piyale Primary School and in 1973 he graduated from a religious vocational high school in Istanbul (İmam Hatip Lisesi). He also obtained a diploma of Eyüp High School, because graduating from a religious school did not entitle him to study at university. In 1981, he obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Administration at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (then known as the Aksaray School of Economics and Commercial Sciences) of the Marmara University (CIDOB 2011: p. 221).

From 1969 to 1982, Erdoğan played amateur football in local clubs and also during this period he began social and political activity, becoming, among others, a member of the National Turkish Student Union. In 1976, he became the chairman of the youth department of the National Salvation Party (tur. *Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*) and then the head of the Istanbul youth department of the MSP. He was an active member of this party until 1980, when, as a result of a military coup, all parties were dissolved.

In the meantime, he also worked as a consultant and manager in the private sector. He returned to politics in 1983 with the Welfare Party (tur. *Refah Partisi, RP*) formed in the same year. A year later he became a chairman of this party in the Beyoğlu district and in 1985 he became the head of its office in Istanbul (CIDOB 2011: p. 221). It should be mentioned that the Welfare Party was the first Islamist party to win elections in Turkey (in December 1995), getting over 21% of votes. The members of this party sought to put Islam into the political life of the state in different ways and through different measures. According to Adam Szymański, Erdoğan belonged to a group of "liberals", in contrast to Necmettin Erbakan, Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the party since 28.06.1996, who was described as a "conservative". (Szymański 2008: p. 232).

In the local elections held on 27.03.1994, Erdoğan was elected Mayor of Istanbul. With time, this position earned him the name of an "effective manager" (Szymański 2008: p. 233). Erdoğan dealt mainly with issues such as housing, water supply, replacement of the heating system and garbage disposal. During his term of office there was a decrease in corruption in the city administration, whereas the loan taken from the World Bank was intended for the construction of the Istanbul metro. His approach to national policy can be illustrated by the statement from 2001 in which he referred to his Istanbul successes: "Turkey does not need bearded experts on the Koran, but people who effectively rule the state" (Szymański 2008: p. 233–234). During his term as mayor, in addition to numerous successes in the field of infrastructure development and improvement of residents' lives, Erdoğan became famous for his 'fiery' speeches delivered during meetings with his supporters. During a public address in Siirt in 1997, he recited a controversial poem by the early republican and nationalist poet Ziya Gökalp "The Soldier's Prayer" (*Asker Duası*), the content of which was seen as incitement to religious hatred (CNN Editorial Research 2021) and an affront to the secular part of society (primarily the army) (Önder, Akçagüner 2016). The *Diyarbakır State Security Court* (Diyarbakır DGM) ruled that by reciting the poem Erdoğan "openly invokes hatred and hostility within the nation, dividing the population by religious, sectarian, racial, regional and class lines" (Önder, Akçagüner 2016). Consequently, Erdoğan was banned from his office and imprisoned for four months.

On 14.08.2001, four years after the Siirt incident, he founded the Justice and Development Party (tur. *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*). His party won the parliamentary election a year later, obtaining 34.3% of votes and holding two-thirds of seats in the Grand National Assembly. Since then, the party has won all subsequent elections in Turkey, and Erdoğan, as its leader, served as the state's prime minister from 2003 to 2014 and then as president from 28.08.2014, chosen for the first time in direct elections.

3. Factors that influenced the success of Recep Erdoğan's political leadership

Since 2002, the Justice and Development Party has been gradually strengthening its position on Turkish political scene and demonstrating to the West the distinctness of the state model and the civilisational identity of Turkey. The system of power has become more and more clearly similar to the nature of Recep Erdoğan's personal rule, who first served as prime minister and then as president. According to some researchers and commentators, Erdoğan's disregard for the legal system and tendency to silence political opponents, has led to a gradual destruction of the constitutional order of the state and a change in Turkey's image in the international arena into an unpredictable and unreliable authoritarian state (Matusiak 2015: p. 5). Nevertheless, for a significant part of Turks, Erdoğan is still a "beloved leader" and a person, in whom they consider as someone similar to themselves. "It can be argued that Erdoğan is what the average Turk sees when he looks in the mirror" (Bekdil 2017). What is the reason for this discrepancy?

3.1. Social factor

Erdoğan's popularity in the Turkish society is influenced by several important factors (Kingsley 2016). The first of them can be described as a social factor. The AKP's leader is perceived as a human being ("one of us"). Even during very intense periods of his term as prime minister, he was able to devote time to visit slum dwellers, taxi drivers and celebrations of Ramazan/Ramadan. During his visits he also found time for merchants which helped him create the image of a politician who is also a member of the Turkish society (Arik, Yavuz 2015: p. 145) and who is able to mobilize his supporters. He became a representative of the lower and middle social class – the classes that felt ignored by political leaders in the past. Quoting European Council analyst Aslı Aydıntaşbaşı, "the entire AKP narrative is about the periphery taking control of the country from the elites who had been abusing state power, and [his supporters] see Erdoğan as the impersonation of that narrative. In the past all the state institutions were felt to be anti-people. But now these institutions are their institutions" (Kingsley 2016).

Erdoğan and his party gained power mainly thanks to the crisis that hit the state in the 1990s and which was in a sense considered as "exhaustion and embarrassment of the current top-down development model, in which the tone of internal policy was set by old secular clerical, political, intellectual and military elites" (*Turcji problem z Zachodem* 2017). The new model proposed by Erdoğan was supposed to meet the needs of this part of the society, which can be described as conservative. According to this group, the old model favored the "laic" Turks governing the country. For Erdoğan's supporters, old Turkish elites originated from the Ottoman times, lived at the expense of the state and were developing the vision of Turkey as a country pushed by the West (*Turcji problem z Zachodem* 2017). It was the conservative part of the society that believed the most in the "new order" proposed by Erdoğan. For them, it was expected to fulfill the postulate of "great Turkey" in the best way.

3.2. Economic factor

The second factor influencing the success of Erdoğan's leadership is related to the sphere of economics (Kingsley 2016). The election in 2002 followed (as has already been mentioned) the major economic crisis that hit Turkey. According to some authors, the political parties that existed at the time were neither reliable nor strong enough to be able to propose a reasonable political offer to voters, and therefore, the Justice and Development Party seemed to be an appropriate alternative (Filiztekin, Bakis 2014: p. 2). At the time of continuous economic crisis, huge unemployment and rising prices, a light of hope was seen, among others, in successes achieved by Recep Erdoğan in local politics and his effective management of Istanbul (Ahmad 2003: p. 182).

After assuming power, the Justice and Development Party emphasised that its priority was democratisation of the state and accession to the European Union. As Jakub Wódka notes: "The AKP was created de facto on the wave of the accession process and it was the EU that legitimised the new grouping in both national and Western public opinion. [In turn] the processes of Europeanisation led to the mobilisation and consolidation of the Turkish liberal forces which perceived the AKP to be their representative" (Wódka 2015: p. 146). The AKP successfully promoted accession to the European Union and the democratic reform program, which undoubtedly was also aimed at obtaining support from the voters of the center (Aydın-Düzgüt, Keyman 2013: p. 111).

Voters were assured that economic reforms, not the revival of Islam, would occupy the main place in domestic politics. In this way, the AKP used the social belief that joining the EU structures will be a catalyst for stable democracy and a stronger economy. Pro-European foreign policy confirmed that the AKP is not only focused on modernising the country but is also a pragmatic party which uses foreign policy in order to find solutions crucial for the development of the state. Therefore, the pro-European nature of foreign policy gave the AKP support of both liberal and conservative voters. The reforms required by the European Union were important for both of these groups. For liberal voters these reforms meant democratic changes, whereas for conservatives they meant protection of religious rights against severe conservatism (which, according to Esen Kirdiş, for this part of the society is seen in secularism) (Kirdiş 2016: p. 33).

After Turkey was granted candidate country status, there was a social consensus on EU membership. It gave the government of AKP a social mandate to carry out harmonisation reforms (Wódka 2015: p. 147) and to bring state closer to the structures of the European Union. Erdoğan initiated a number of political reforms during the next years of his rule. On the basis of these reforms, Kurds' cultural rights were extended and the army's participation in political spheres was limited. All this was intended to bring Turkey closer to membership of the EU and was initially welcomed by the European Union.

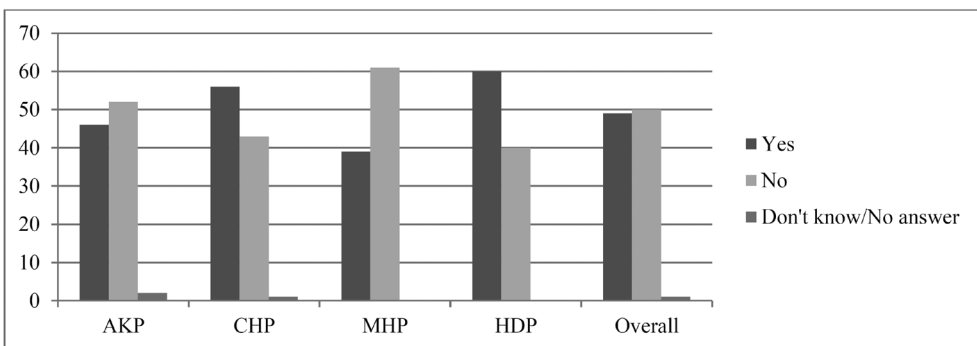
However, shortly after the above-mentioned reforms, democratic changes came to a standstill and other issues became priority for the AKP and Erdoğan (Bahcheli 2018: p. 2). Although the government pointed to the EU support for many of its reforms, it relied more on public support than on the EU's legitimacy to accelerate changes. As a result of growing disappointment with the prospect of EU membership in the Turkish society,

Erdoğan and his party began to shape their policy in a way to maintain support by blaming the accession process for stagnation. It was emphasised that the EU needs Turkey more than Turkey needs the EU, and the membership itself began to be denied by the Turkish leader (in 2017 statement by Erdoğan he said that: "the prospect of being a full union member was 'not indispensable for us'" (Samuels 2017).

Despite the decreasing interest in EU issues by Erdoğan and his party, a significant part of Turkish society continues to support the prospect of Turkey's membership in structures of the Union (and at the time of the economic crisis this support became even more apparent). Economic Development Foundation (İKV) data demonstrates that in 2015, 61.8% of Turks were in favor of their country's membership in the European Union and in 2017 this percentage increased to 78.9% (Hurriyet Daily News 2018; Bankier.pl 2018).

The approach of the Turkish society towards EU membership is somewhat differently presented by the results of the Metropoll research, which was conducted by means of face-to-face interviews from 24.05.2018 to 4.06.2018 (on a sample of 2 534 people from 28 provinces). This data demonstrates that 49% of respondents are in favor of Turkey's membership in the European Union and 50% are against it (1% of respondents have no opinion). This regularity is slightly different in the case of the electorates of individual political parties. In the case of the AKP electorate, 46% of respondents are in favor of membership and 52% are against it (2% do not have any opinion). The European Union has the greatest support among supporters of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (tur. *Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP*) – 60%, and the least (39%) among voters of the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (tur. *Milliyetçi Mareket Partisi, MHP*). More supporters than opponents of membership are also among those supporting the center-left Republican People's Party (tur. *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP*): 56% – for membership, 43% – against (Hoffman 2018: p. 3). The detailed results of the survey on the distribution of support for EU membership in the electorates of individual political parties in Turkey in 2018 are presented in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: Do you want Turkey to be part of the EU? (Survey of Metropoll 2018)



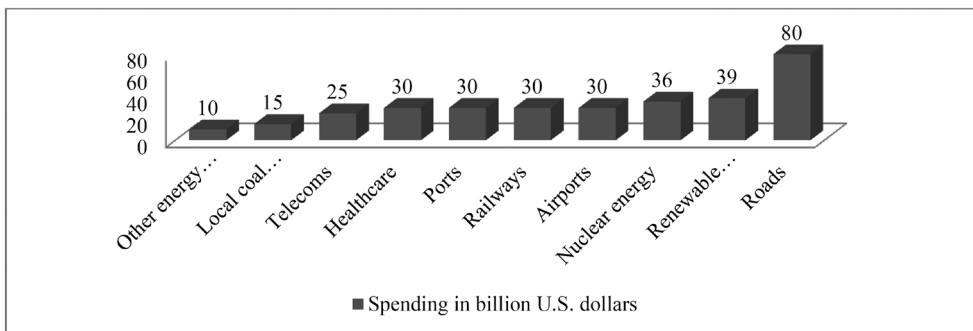
Source: Hoffman 2018: p. 3.

3.2.1. Infrastructure policy and health care as examples of Erdoğan's achievements in domestic politics

Among many areas of social life and changes that occurred in Turkey during the AKP's rule, it is impossible not to notice the actions of Erdoğan and his party in the field of infrastructure policy. A third airport, which is also one of the largest in the world, as well as another bridge on the Bosphorus, have been built in Istanbul. A network of local roads, highways and bridges has been developed in Anatolia (Bekdil 2017). In total, projects under public-private partnership (PPP) in the years 2003–2018 included 5 600 km of highways, 11 800 km of high-speed railway tracks or 44 300 new beds in 32 integrated health campuses (Presidency of The Republic of Turkey Investment Office 2019).

On the other hand, the state budget for the years 2017–2023 provided funds in the amount of USD 80 billion for road investments and energy goals (USD 39 billion for renewable energy, USD 35 billion for nuclear energy, USD 15 billion for local coal energy and USD 10 billions for other energy sources), as well as the expansion of airports, railways and ports (USD 30 billion for each branch) (Clark 2019). The chart below presents the estimated infrastructure investment data in Turkey for 2017–2023 by a particular sector.

Figure 2: Estimated data for infrastructure investments in Turkey for 2017–2023 (by sector)



Source: Clark 2019.

Moreover, the healthcare system has undergone significant reforms during the AKP's rule and is seen as one of the greatest achievements of the Erdoğan's era (Armstrong WW). According to Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) data, the percentage of citizens "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the national healthcare system increased from 40% in 2003 to almost 75% in 2013. The AKP's reforms introduced in Turkey included, among others, compulsory universal health insurance model that covered all citizens (finally introduced in 2008). As a consequence, Turkish citizens were obliged to pay contributions to the public health insurance fund, regardless of employment status (the exception in this matter is income or lack, which qualifies for dismissal or subsidy from the state treasury). As a result of the reform, some healthcare services, such as ambulances and cancer treatment, have become free in both public and private hospitals (Armstrong WW).

3. 3. Cultural (religious) factor

Another factor contributing to the success of Erdoğan's leadership has a cultural character. Initially, in order not to give another excuse to the Constitutional Tribunal for its banning, the Justice and Development Party taught by the experience of closing its opponents carefully developed its own program. Furthermore, by "considering religion as one of [the most important elements] in human life and secularism as a necessary condition for democracy, the party declared that it was against perceiving the latter as an enemy of religion and the use of religious values for political purposes" (Zastawna-Templin 2011: p. 59). In the first years of the AKP's rule, the impulse for its supporters was coming from a strong focus on economic issues, economic reforms and Turkey's integration with the European Union. Over time, the AKP focused more on religious matters and more strongly began to use the state to promote Islam (Kenyon 2019).

Although, as Professor Murat Somer of Koc University claims, "very active and costly efforts to promote religiosity do not appear to be having much effect" (Kenyon 2019). Such opinions can be confirmed by Konda data, according to which the number of non-believers in Turkey has tripled over the last ten years, whereas Islamic membership has been declared by less and less Turks (a decrease from 55% to 51%). However, the Turkey's Official Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) data of 2014, say that 99% of Turkey's population identifies as Muslims, even if a significant proportion of them only in the cultural and sociological sense (Ögreten 2019). For many of Turks, being a Muslim is synonymous with being a Turk. In addition, as much as 74% of the population declares "to fulfill all Islamic duties" and the same number (74%) describes themselves as conservative or religiously conservative, which may to some extent explain Erdoğan's popularity in this group of voters (Bekdil 2017). Admittedly, the AKP electorate includes representatives of minority groups but for the most part it is made up of a group of ethnic Turks, representatives of the Sunni Islam movement (*Erdogan's New Sultanate* 2016: p. 9), who clearly perceive Erdoğan as the best leader in Turkish history (Dinç 2016).

This is also confirmed by the analysis of Alpay Filiztekin and Ozan Bakis. According to the results of their research, religiosity and ethnicity are important determinants among AKP voters. In 2002, the party maintained the votes of "religious" voters who in the previous elections had voted for Islamic parties (the authors describe them as votes of the Islamists). (Filiztekin, Bakis 2014: p. 11).

It is not an uncommon opinion that Erdoğan's attitude towards the ban on wearing headscarves at Universities and public places had a major impact on support for him (Köksal 2017). This ban dates back to the 1980s, when, as a result of military coup, the dress-code of officials at workplaces was defined. From that moment, women covering their hair could no longer be employed in public administration structures. As a result of the 1997 reform, the ban was also extended to universities and since then all women using this headwear could neither study nor give lectures at universities.

This ban, in the name of defending secularism, excluded thousands of women every year from being able to study and graduate. It was found to be discriminatory, violating women's rights to education, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right

to privacy (Human Rights Watch 2004). The most famous case related to the "headscarf" issue is the case of Leyla Şahin, a medical student at Istanbul University, removed in 1998 for using a religious symbol banned at universities. The case was referred to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). On 29 June 2004, the Fourth Chamber of the Court rejected Şahin's application, admitting that the right to freedom of religion had been violated but in the Turkish context it is acceptable. On 10.12.2005, after a public hearing, the Grand Chamber, by a majority, rejected the Turkish request again. It repeated the arguments of the Fourth Chamber recognising that Turkey's violation of fundamental rights regarding the headscarf is admissible and justified (Benli 2006: p. 1). The Court's decision sparked an avalanche of comments and strengthened Turkish society's belief that Europe (including the European Union) is hostile to Muslims. Erdoğan also commented on the situation, repeatedly undermining the court's verdict and considering that the headgear was a religious order and that secular institutions should not express their opinion in such matters. He also questioned the legitimacy of the ban itself and announced its abolition to improve democracy (Aljazeera 2013). This approach ensured him the favor of this part of the society which had a similar opinion in this matter. According to data, in subsequent years of the AKP's rule, opposition to the ban on wearing headscarves at universities and public institutions increased. According to statistics from 2007, from 69% to 78% of Turks were in favor of lifting the ban at that time. At the same time, the percentage of women covering their hair with a headscarf increased even more clearly, almost five times from 2003 to 2007 (Śmigasiewicz 2011: p. 98).

As one might have guessed, "AKP-related politicians gradually began to move away from pro-democratic and pro-EU discourse, focusing on issues related to human rights which, nevertheless, were strongly embedded in a religious context" (Bieniek 2013: p. 188). It should be noted, however, that the ECHR's decision signaled that the headscarf issue may not be included among the formal requirements of EU accession. This reduced the AKP's ability to use membership as a way of promoting greater individual rights and religious freedoms in the country.

Erdoğan's reluctance to consume alcohol (for religious reasons) also earns him supporters. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) data from 2016, as many as 89.1% of Turks (over 15 years of age) declare to be lifelong abstinents (including 82.7% among men and 95.1% among women) (WHO 2016). Erdoğan did not hide his contempt for drinking often expressing the opinion that "whoever drinks alcohol is an alcoholic". According to statistics from TÜİK, between Erdoğan's rise to power in 2003 and January 2018, the price of beer increased by 618%, and *rakı* (Turkish anise vodka) by 725% (Weise 2018). In addition to the increase in taxes on alcohol, the AKP also introduced restrictions on its sale. From 2013, stores cannot sell alcohol after 10 p.m. and within a 100-meter radius of the mosque. Alcohol advertising is also prohibited, and when it appears on Turkish television it is often blurred.

The introduction of new regulations in the field of alcohol policy by the ruling forces is justified by the need to protect public health and prevent the consumption of alcohol by minors. However, the secular part of the society considers these restrictions

as lifestyle-related (Weise 2018) (the founder of modern Turkey and promoter of the Western-European cultural model – Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has been portrayed for years with a glass of *rakı* in his hand. This part of the society which lives in accordance with the principles introduced by Atatürk, recognizes the new AKP's law as interference in the private sphere of citizens and limitation of the right to choose a lifestyle).

4. Erdoğan as a charismatic leader

The characteristic features of Erdoğan are undoubtedly his appearance, rhetoric, fluency of expression and accent. His tone of voice, gestures and facial expressions increase the effect of his words. In his statements Erdoğan inserts elements of poetry and metaphors: e.g. "If you're the leader, you have to communicate the message of immortality to your people. Because I believe if a leader hides behind a rock, then the people will hide behind a mountains" (Kroft 2016). He also uses phrases which are unique for particular regions. Erdoğan is a leader who pays attention to his appearance. His credibility is emphasised by the fact that he often speaks to his followers without a desktop which accentuates his self-confidence (Görener, Ucal 2011: p. 357). Erdoğan has always been and is the undisputed leader of his party and has been consistently building his own position among its ranks. In the 2014 local elections, the AKP even led a campaign in which their slogan consisted only of its leader's surname (Arik, Yavuz 2015: p. 147). As Jakub Wódka notes, "in the case of Turkey, to a bigger extent than in countries with well-established democracy, charismatic leaders who lead political parties leave their mark on the internal and foreign policy of the state. One can even define the system prevailing in Turkey as political feudalism. According to authors who investigate the subject of political parties in Turkey, some of their characteristics can be described as: oligarchy of party leaders, intra-party autocracy, oligarchic tendencies, highly disciplined party leadership, and over-centralised structures. This phenomenon can be defined as a personalisation of politics in which the leading role is played by a strong leader, an individual political actor" (Wódka 2015: p. 144).

Erdoğan has also many features of a charismatic leader. The concept of charisma can be understood in two different ways (Antoszewski, Herbut 2004: p. 52). First of all, it is an attribute or a personal feature of an individual, attributed to its exceptional quality, something that this unit possesses or is equipped with. Initially, it had a religious reference – a "divine gift" as an attribute of Catholic saints. Over time, charisma began to be identified with all kinds of personal characteristics of the individual that make him stand out from the rest of society.

Secondly, charisma refers to the relationship between the leader and his supporters. It is the ability of a leader to exert a very clear influence on the normative orientation of other members of the community. The effect of this relationship should be the transformation of values or beliefs accepted by the supporters (and not only their behaviour). A leader is considered charismatic, when (1) he has a specific mission to fulfill, and (2) his spontaneous features, abilities or qualities are recognised by his supporters

(this recognition is also based on irrational feelings and emotions for which the point of reference can be understood as the qualities of a leader or his abilities seen "in the image of a divine sigma"). This term is used to refer to a leader and the qualities he has been equipped with or which he possesses (Antoszewski, Herbut 2004: p. 51–52). Therefore, it does not refer to the goals of the leader or the motives he follows.

As Jolanta Babiak notes: "A charismatic leader impresses his subordinates. He gains their obedience, especially in unknown, problematic and critical situations. Then, requiring guidance and being shown the way out of the impasse, the subordinates are ready to submit to the guidelines of a person who has a convincing program of action. Therefore, charismatic leadership can be seen through the prism of the influence exercised on subordinates and a strong emotional bond between subordinates and the leader. The direction of emotional involvement is determined by the leader – he is admired and adored by his subordinates. On the other hand, he is also confronted with strong negative emotions of the opponents" (Babiak 2008: p. 91–92). It is of utmost importance for a charismatic leader that the community which is to be led by him, perceives him as charismatic (as charisma is created on the basis of contacts between the leader and the environment) (Kotras 2008: p. 71).

The research of Ümit Arklan has demonstrated that the most preferred type of political leader in Turkish society is the charismatic leader. Incidentally, the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is defined by Turkish authors in this category (Arslan 2005: p. 140). In contrast, authoritarian and democratic leaders appear to be the least accepted (Arklan 2006: p. 63). The above-mentioned research was carried out between 1.05.2004 and 15.05.2004 in Konya using a questionnaire consisting of 138 questions and the sample being selected randomly (Arklan 2006: p. 51). The questionnaire which was used to conduct the study consisted of three parts. The first part contained questions about the general characteristics of a charismatic, authoritarian and democratic leader. In the second, the same 63 questions referred to the person of Recep Erdoğan and were supposed to show to what extent his leadership falls into these three categories. The third part of the questionnaire concerned the determination of the demographic and social characteristics of the individuals participating in the study (including their political preferences). The study demonstrated that Erdoğan is seen as a leader with charismatic features in groups such as people with primary and secondary education. On the other hand, officials, housewives and the working class, more often indicate his characteristics as an authoritarian leader. As a democratic leader, Erdoğan was defined primarily among pensioners, housewives, officials, self-employed, students (graduates of all levels of education) (Arklan 2006: p. 63).

4.1 The effectiveness of Erdoğan's leadership

The first major crisis that took place in the country during Erdoğan's rule and which could confirm the effectiveness of his leadership were Gezi's protests. In May 2013, bulldozers and demolition machines entered the Gezi Park, located near Taksim Square in the center of Istanbul. Trees, which were blocking the way, were to be removed in order

to carry out the development project launched in 2011 – *The project for the Taksim car movement* and the reconstruction of Ottoman military barracks (Ottoman Barracks). The reconstruction plans included, among others, shopping center and mosque (Özkaynak et al. 2015: p. 101). In his statements, Erdoğan also mentioned the construction of a hotel and a museum.

To prevent the planned reconstruction, a small group of environmentalists decided that they would spend the night in the park and already two days later, during the celebration of the conquest of Istanbul by the Turks (May 29, 2013), the then prime minister addressed the park occupants with the words, "Do whatever you want in Gezi Park. We made the decision" (Gürcan, Peker 2014: p. 71). The next day, police entered the park and tried to disperse the protesters. They were attacked with tear gas and their tents were dismantled and set on fire (Özkaynak et al. 2015: p. 101). These actions had the opposite effect to the intended one. Information appearing in social media was widely heard among the Turks, who, in protest against the actions of the authorities, began to fill the streets of Turkish cities. Within a few weeks, over 2.5 million people protested in 79 Turkish cities, opposing government and police.

Demonstrating his disrespectful attitude towards political opponents and wanting to gain the support of a more religious part of the society, Erdoğan organised a rally gathering supporters in Istanbul's main square. Preparations involved public means of transport and public funds. During the meeting he reported that the "furious crowd of protesters" consumed alcohol in the mosque, got into it with shoes on their feet and trampled on the rugs. In order to show the continuing popularity of the prime minister and his party before the first elections that followed the Gezi protests (local government elections in 2014), numerous support rallies were organised, gathering much larger crowds than Gezi's protests. Their slogan was "in democracy the will of the majority is determined by the ballot box, not on the street by looters". People who took part in Gezi's protests were described by Erdoğan as people who know too little to win the election and who turned to foreign supporters in order to destabilize the country (Taspinar 2014: p. 52). The AKP (as it turned out later) won the following election, gaining a higher result than five years earlier (local elections: 2009 – 38.8%, 2014 – 43.4%).

The analysis of events from Gezi and Erdoğan's attitude towards protesting environmentalists confirm the assumption that he takes an aggressive stand against his opponents and lives in confrontation (which can be proved by his contemptuous attitude towards his critics) (Görener, Ucal 2011: p. 357). Another example would be a list of 1 400 Turkish and foreign research workers (including Noam Chomsky) who signed a petition condemning military operations against Kurds in the southeast area of the country. Erdoğan called the signees "so-called intellectuals" and accused them of treason and being "a fifth column of foreign powers" sympathising with terrorists and seeking to weaken the national security of his country (Weaver 2016). A significant number of scientists were later imprisoned, among others on the charge of treason (which allows us to conclude that Erdoğan effectively eliminates opponents while convincing its own supporters of the necessity and legitimacy of such actions).

Events related to the Gezi Protests demonstrate Erdoğan's ability to turn a crisis into his own advantage in a short time (winning elections and improving the party's score). This can also be confirmed by the consequences of the coup that took place in Turkey on 15-16.07.2016. It was then that Erdoğan's actions allowed the Turks to believe that he was a leader who could "lead [...] the nation to victory in the fight against the conspirators", whereas "heroism [which he demonstrated] during the coup and his unity with the people [...] further strengthened his [own] legitimacy" (Chudziak 2017: p. 37). All this ultimately led to the implementation of Erdoğan's long-term plan and the change of the political system in the state. At the same time, he himself gained greater prerogatives and the opportunity to lead in the coming years.

Conclusions

From the beginning of his political activity, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has aroused numerous controversies. In literature and the press, he was described as both a charismatic leader who can attract crowds, as well as an autocrat or a new sultan. The authors characterize his character in their analyzes as "a reflection of the Turkish everyman – an ordinary Turk" or a pragmatic populist. Erdoğan has undoubtedly an unquestioned and strong position on the Turkish political scene. For a significant part of the society he is an irreplaceable person and the best leader in the history of the country. He is able to turn crises in a very skillful way into his own advantage and convince his supporters to his point of view.

Factors that significantly influenced the success of Erdoğan's leadership can be described as social, economic and cultural. During almost 18 years of his rule, Erdoğan and his party have achieved impressive accomplishments both locally and internationally. Democratic reforms were implemented in Turkey on an unprecedented scale. Erdoğan tackled many issues previously seen as taboo (e.g. liberalisation of the policy towards the Kurdish minority during the second and third term of office of the AKP government). In addition, Erdoğan's activities which were firmly focused on economic issues, health care reforms and Turkey's integration with the European Union enabled him to gain the support of even this part of the society whose values are distant from the ones he accepts. At the same time, those who felt overlooked by the elites before the AKP's rule found someone similar to themselves in Erdoğan.

Despite many achievements, Erdoğan is associated more with a high level of social control, restriction of freedom of speech, imprisoning judges, political dissidents, journalists and scientists. His uncompromisingness in pursuit of political goals as well as attitude towards religion and the nation put Erdoğan among the radically retrospective leaders (Antoszewski 2007) who with a sense of both moral and historical mission are guided by ethics of beliefs, allowing them to minimize the importance of social resistance and underestimate the opponents. Erdoğan's political leadership over recent years confirms that in most cases his supporters completely share his point of view. Furthermore, they are an integrated and mobilised political community beyond which remain his political opponents, who have not yet been posing a real threat.

Dominika Liszkowska – PhD in international relations, Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Sciences at the Faculty of Humanities of the Koszalin University of Technology. Research interests: Turkey-EU relations, political system of Turkey, EU foreign policy, the role of the European Union in international relations, migration policy, human rights, intercultural communication, theories of European integration, history of European integration, security theories, societal security.

Dominika Liszkowska – doktor nauk społecznych w zakresie nauki o stosunkach międzynarodowych, adiunkt w Katedrze Nauk o Polityce na Wydziale Humanistycznym Politechniki Koszalińskiej. Zainteresowania naukowe: stosunki Turcji z Unią Europejską, system polityczny Turcji, polityka zagraniczna UE, rola Unii Europejskiej w stosunkach międzynarodowych, polityka migracyjna, prawa człowieka, komunikacja międzykulturowa, teorie integracji europejskiej, historia integracji europejskiej, teorie bezpieczeństwa, bezpieczeństwo społeczne.

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