

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN SAMPLE)

¹İRFAN ARIK, ²CEVİT YAVUZ

¹Ph.D. Student, Faculty of Communication, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, Kyrgyzstan.

²Assoc.Prof., Higher School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Ordu University, Turkey

E-mail: irfanarik@hotmail.com, cavityavuz@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The importance of political leaders' character traits in domestic and international politics of countries is an issue that can not be ignored. For this reason, starting from the Greek philosophers the personality traits of leaders has formed the agenda of many scholars. In foreign policy rather than emotions, interests are more important and even in this field it is seen that leaders' personality traits may outshine their country and add a positive value to their country or may have a negative impact on their country's image. Today, when you have a look at the leaders who appear most in the world media, you can easily realize that they come to the fore with their individual characteristics as well as their countries' political and economic power. This situation is more valid in countries like Turkey which tends to be European although it still has the traces of eastern culture.

The purpose of this study is to study Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership characteristics and to reveal the reflection of these characteristics on Turkey's international relations as he being one of the effective leaders in Turkish political life and in the arena of international politics with the beginning of the 21st century.

Keywords: Leadership, Policy, Image, International relations

1. INTRODUCTION

It will be noticed immediately that Turkey is one of the biggest candidates to be a regional power considering its dating back a thousand years history, its rich culture and its strategic geographical location. Developments in the field of economics especially after the 2000s, active politics strategy pursued in foreign policy and the advantages of being one-party rule strengthened Turkey's power. Rather than somehow never fully implemented five-year development plans for various reasons, today Turkey is a country which has set as a target its "2023 vision of Turkey". Undoubtedly the largest share in the creation of this vision is the former Prime Minister and today's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who has increased the percentage of his party votes for three election periods continuously. As a leader who has put himself new goals and reached his goals for every election period, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has already been a considerable place in the Turkish political history. Erdoğan won the latest local elections held in March 2014 and the presidential elections held in August 2014. To achieve the specified targets for 2023 not only in domestic politics, but also in the international arena he needs to show the same success. At this point we face the complex nature of international relations. What is more, there is not a certain two blocked world as in the cold war era when all sides were clearly defined.

At a dizzying speed of change that is happening in today's world, if a person, a company or an organization can not keep up this pace, it is doomed to extinction. The biggest contribution to this so fast and quick change has been made by the world of media. Communication media has reached unimaginable dimensions in this era and every aspect of our life has become controllable due to the mass media. The basic function of the mass media is to break the news, to inform and to entertain, but today it plays a key role in the realization of the social, political and economic change and in the formation of the consumer society. In a situation where everything is consumed so quickly, taking part in the media and creating an agenda even for a short time becomes important and to accomplish this everything may seem reasonable, may be followed. Because the value of the positive image created through the media is invaluable for politicians. Therefore media is an important platform for leaders who always want to be in mind, who want to be recognized well, who want to be heard and who want to be taken into account and who want have a positive image. (Yıldız, 2002:67).

In Turkey after the 2000s, the first leader that comes to mind is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the most remaining on the agenda and even as the person who created the agenda through those years. Not only in Turkey but also

abroad, Turkey's international relations policies and the present situation can not be evaluated independently of his leadership qualities. Erdoğan is a leader who is effective and strong in interpersonal communication and he has very good use of body language and rhetoric that may affect and steer the masses. Indeed, in Ak's study (2012) where Ozal and Erdoğan are compared, Erdoğan is defined as: "Erdoğan is a leader who challenge political obstacles, who is open to learning and who is relationship-oriented. This reveals that he has a 'Router Leader' profile." Here "Router Leader" profile has been called as "charismatic leader" by the author in other parts of the study. According to the study on Erdoğan and charisma made by Arklan (2004), it is found out that "Turkish society wants most the charismatic leader type, other leader types such as authoritarian and democratic leaders are not so much wanted and properties owned by those leaders are seen not so much important."

In the study made by Aytas on "Political Rise Effect of Local Government Leadership: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Case" it is indicated that "Erdoğan has the qualities of charismatic leader type and he is a leader who can challenge political obstacles in decision-making process, who is open to new information and who has intrinsic motivation." According to Aytas "one of the most important features of the charismatic leader is they can convert the crisis into their benefit in a short time." When Erdoğan's political life analyzed it can be better understood how accurate it is.

In this study, besides giving theoretical information on leadership concept, since his domestic and overseas effectiveness is accepted by everyone, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership qualities, his charisma and his public diplomacy activities on the way to make his country a regional power will be evaluated. This study is important in terms of being resources for relevant researches to be done hereafter.

2. LEADERSHIP

In recent years the concept of leadership has become a research topic that should be evaluated independently from other areas rather than a concept evaluated under different fields and disciplines. There are different actors in the management of a country (Cicioğlu, 2012:77). One of the most important one is the leader. Because the leading features of leaders help them to come to the fore more than other actors.

The dictionary meaning of 'leader' is "the person or leader who is at the top of an organization or a political organization", in fact leadership is being the leading one, having very rich personal qualities, resourcefulness, scientific and cultural richness, mass efficiency power. The most common definition of leadership is collecting people around with certain objectives and motivating people to take action (Süar, 2011:13).

People are social beings who survive in groups. They feel the need to be in a group to perform some of their own goals and desires. It is only possible with the skills and persuasive ability of a leader to direct a group toward a specific target (Eren, 2009:501). According to Rost (1991:102), leadership is defined as; "having common objectives with his/her followers, aiming real changes, and influencing the relationship between the audience". According to another view, leadership is defined as; "the art of motivating people to achieve a common goal" (Bowerman and Wart, 2011:4). We can say that leadership occurs in groups, needs to have common goals, aims to influence others and it is a process (Northouse, 2010:3).

In terms of leader it is more important to show reasonable and sensible to domestic public opinion the complicated decisions or steps in the framework of international relations. At this point, to create a positive image in the public some leaders use their leadership skills and some get help from media professionals through the effective use of mass media. According to Yağmurlu (2007:22); "the positive image of the country in the international system plays a role in enhancing international activities." The most important factor in the positive image of a country is the leaders of the country. Today, even in countries where the most advanced stage of institutionalization exists, the influence of leaders has not diminished.

In fact, a leader refers to a value of much greater than the sum of all those above mentioned. It is needed to examine the concept of management and administration to better define the leader and to clarify his/her place within the organization, because the concepts of leaders and managers are often mixed and used interchangeably.

Management is a process of identification of direction to the staff for the realization of aims and objectives set by the organization's top management, mobilization and evaluation of results. A manager is a person who uses the existing organizational structure and working system to achieve the objectives of an organization. A leader is a person who has the power to influence others rather than only comply with the orders, directives and ordinances. In this sense, leadership can be defined as the launching of a new structure or system to realize the goals of an organization or a new structure (Zaleznik, 1999:67).

While leaders aim to do the right things, managers focus on doing the things right. Leadership is the reflection of personality apart from the authority and status. Leaders are usually self-confident and they act less personally, generate ideas quickly, take action and become sensitive to the behaviors of those around. Personal integrity is an important need for leadership. Leadership emerges according to new situations without depending on obvious qualities. So the existing condition can create a leader (Yıldız, 2012:128). Leadership does not occur as a product

of any assignment. To qualify a person as a leader his/her subordinates should see him as a leader. Some other properties that characterize leadership can be counted such as to inspire, to influence, to create a team spirit, to be an example and to be accepted (Aytaş, 2013:23).

A leader does not apply to a compelling way; he/she almost programs the social structure. Characteristics such as personal authority, being visionary, various character attributes, precision, courage, integrity, intelligence provide the presence of a leader. Prophets, Ataturk, Lenin, Mandela, Hitler ... are the examples of personal leadership.

Considering all these aspects, the concept of management competency becomes a matter of debate. Indeed, leadership skills are needed to solve complex problems, to create a strong sense of commitment and motivation within the organization. When we look at the history, it is seen that the leaders are creators and implementers of great vision and plans. Mongolia's leader Genghis Khan, the sultans of the Ottoman Empire (Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, Fatih and others), Ataturk and many other leaders gained great victories for their countries. A leader is the person who leads his nation or institution and drags them behind by setting targets (Arklan, 2013:84).

3. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF LEADERSHIP CONCEPT.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, it is a valid description especially in politics that the people who can reach the highest peak of the art of managing public are called as real leaders. Of course, this is the most natural form of identification for people who live in different parts of the world and who are successful in handling the administration during hundreds of years in human history. No matter in what region of the world, the systems of dominance in history have different names such as "bey, hakan, shah, king, czar, kayzer, emperor", they are not much different from each other though. But all of these names are often given to them as they are noble, they are from royal family and they accede to the throne when their turn comes. Therefore, according to historians there are not so many rulers among those who have the leadership qualities.

In fact, giving the title "leader" to people who rule the country, who have effective sovereignty and who lead the state is the most accurate form of identification. However, it is better to look at the region where a leader establishes dominance and the terms and structural assets of masses living there. Throughout human history, as social life evolves, people have been in the effort of having their lands and around, development, even expansion and make it larger in time. At this point political leaders come to the fore (Süar, 2011:15).

According to the researches which started in the 1900s to try to find an answer to the question "What is leadership?", charismatic features were considered enough to be a leader at the beginning of the century. However, intensively in 1930s– 1940s by the help of the studies focusing on the Characteristics of Leaders approach, they were accepted as inadequate since the studies showed that individuals with different personal characteristics exhibit different behaviors in certain cases. As a result, from 1940 until the end of the 1960s, researches made on the behaviors of the leaders, between 1960 and 1980 researches focused on the opinions about situational requirements and how leaders' behaviors relate to compliance with these requirements. In 1978, J. M. Burns and B. M. Bass brought a new distinction of the so-called Contemporary Approaches to Leadership opinion named Transactional and Transformational and have remained until the present date. According to this approach, leaders are called as transactional leaders who reconcile past and present and as transformational leaders who reconcile present and future (Steward, 2006:8).

Another important dimension of transformational leadership is that it embodies "Charismatic Leadership" too. Today, Putin, Obama and Erdoğan may be examples of charismatic leaders. Former president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, can also be counted among those leaders. Charismatic leaders have a vision, have developed skills to transfer this vision to their followers, have an idea about their strength and they are highly consistent in moving in the direction of their visions. Leaders of this nature are people with those features: courage, risk-taking, entrepreneurship, charisma, eloquence, challenge, strategy, protection, justice, power, action, application, result orientation, speed, and struggling. A charismatic leader is perceived as a person having extraordinary features by the members of the group (Aytaş, 2013:40).

Charismatic leadership is the closest leadership style to the Turkish culture and mentality. Leadership positions in our country will undertake the identity of a father by protecting the members of the team, by watching them out and by solving problems in their private life. In this leadership style in which leaders may get angry very quickly but they are well-intentioned and they can also act emotionally with a non-professional perspective like ignoring the errors of the people on the team. Charismatic leadership is a type which emerges especially after the crises and social events such as economic crisis, social crisis and war. At the same time charismatic leader is the representative of authority.

The leadership approach adopted in developed and modern countries is the participative leadership style. Nowadays, in any environment where there is more than one person, democratic management stands out and there is a need for participatory leadership at every level. Participatory leadership has come to the fore in internalizing and putting

into practice the rules for participatory democracy that is made mandatory by law in many countries.

4. RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN'S LEADERSHIP PROPERTIES

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's political life started when he was elected as the chairman of Beyoglu Youth Branch of the National Salvation Party in 1976. Then, in 1984 he became Beyoglu District Chairman of the Welfare Party. He continued his career being this party's Provincial Chairman for Istanbul in 1985 and being the Istanbul Mayor in 1994 (<http://www.akparti.org.tr/site> viewed on 12.06.2014). He has had an important effect on the Turkish political life with the 2000s up to the present by being the first-party in 2002 general elections and then becoming the prime minister in 2003. His leadership qualities and charisma is one of the major reasons of his success in the ballot box as he has got stronger in every election he has entered since 2002. In 1994, when he became the Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan with a 25.1 percent of the vote, some claimed it was coincidental and some others said that he was successful because the opposition was weak. But he soon proved with his successive accomplishments that his success was not due to those reasons.

When it comes to where Erdoğan's political accomplishments, his political power and charisma stem from, first of all Erdoğan was the person who was the undisputed leader of his party. Even though his party was a big party, there is no alternative to him and his leadership had not been questioned within the party in no time.

He is also a prominent leader with his physical appearance and rhetoric. His speech fluency and accent are also his important features together with his stage performance. His way to using his tone of voice, his gestures and his facial expressions increase the effect of what he is saying. From time to time his reading poetry and his using a phrase unique to the region are also appreciated. Moreover, his using every corner of the stage and not hiding himself behind the lectern is the indicator of his self-confidence. It is a known fact that personal image of a leader during rallies is very effective. He is a leader who always pays attention to his appearance and even during rallies he can communicate well with the community across.

When Erdogan was the prime minister, from time to time even in his busiest periods he visited some slums, his neighbours, taxi-stops and he was together with people during the the Holy Ramadan dinners. He chatted with tradesmen wherever he went. And all these helped him about the formation of his image as a public man and somebody from the community.

In Sevinc Engin's meeting with Erdoğan for her book named "Leader Will Be Like This Not Like That" Erdoğan's "leadership" definition is as follows: "A leader is

not pessimistic, he spreads positive energy around. He melts the differences in a single pot, gives confidence to people, does not lie." Yet When Erdoğan is asked to comment on the famous saying "You are born as a leader, you don't become a leader" he responded "Some people can be born prone to leadership temperament. But I think what makes a person a leader is his love for his/her country and the determination he/she has in the social struggle for the sake of his/her country. I believe that social struggles with a longing for a beautiful future create the leadership" (Engin, 2011:145).

5. REFLECTION OF RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN'S LEADERSHIP PROPERTIES ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Erdoğan has been one of the strong and authoritarian leaders who re-emerged in societies other than the western countries in the 21st century. Erdoğan is liked by a significant portion of the population but he has been a leader with authoritarian tendencies similar like Vladimir Putin in Russia, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) in Brazil and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Although this situation appears to be negative, it is mostly accepted as positive and more valuable especially in eastern culture dominated countries such as Turkey. At this point, despite his authoritarianism, Chavez made populist economic preferences in his policies, while Putin and Erdoğan have been sympathetic to the capital sector. Thanks to the created positive image in the public eye, Lula was well-known as a populist and as an honest leader and he was the leader of his country until 2010. Erdoğan, Putin, Lula and Chavez have many similarities. Among those, Erdoğan comes to the fore with leadership qualities rather than his image, because image covers the features which are believed to be on a person rather than he/she actually has.

There are great similarities between the former Brazilian President Lula and Erdoğan's leadership qualities. Like Lula, Erdoğan has managed to gain the support of the broad masses. The words, charismatic and pragmatic, which are used when describing Lula's personality, are also valid for Erdoğan. Both leaders managed to be at the very top of their country despite their modest backgrounds. They succeeded in placing the image that they are from the public, they have the ability to communicate very closely with the masses and they are extremely honest leaders. For example, even when the bribery scandals erupted within Lula's team he didn't lose the support of the masses or he didn't experience a problem in his positive image. And for this reason, he was known as 'Teflon President'. Indeed, even at the end of the eighth year of the ruling his public support was over 80%. When Lula left office in 2010, the Energy Minister Dilma Rousseff whom he backed was elected as the new president (Çelik Wiltse, 2010:11).

His vision that he created with the changes he promised, with his large scale projects and sometimes with his personal efforts has made the people to look to the future

with hope though people were consoling themselves that an agreement was made with the IMF or there had been no crisis for decades. As a result he has been positioned in a place separate from other leaders. Not only in his own country but also in Middle Eastern countries and in Central Asian Turkish Republics he is seen as an appreciated and admired leader.

Erdoğan has entered as the fifth person to "The World's Most Powerful 500 Muslims" list prepared by the U.S. internationally renowned Georgetown University and Jordan-based Centre of Strategic Studies. The rankings in this list were prepared by Georgetown University according to following criteria: their power in their own countries; their effects on neighboring countries and their contributions to the developments in the world in 2009. In the list Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was the first and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took the fifth place leaving behind many kings and emirs. In the first ten rankings of the list, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the only democratically elected leader and all the other names are Arab sheikhs and emirs of the Middle East countries. (<http://wowturkey.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=92655> viewed on:20.05.2014).

The famous U.S. magazine 'Time' chose the Prime Minister Erdoğan as cover story for its November 28th, 2011 issue. After Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü and Adnan Menderes, Erdoğan was the fourth Turkish leader on the cover of 'Time' magazine. In his journal a review took place that Erdoğan sets an example for Arab countries politically and economically. The title on the cover was 'Erdoğan's way'. The following statement took place in that article: "Erdoğan brought his country into a regional leader. So, will the example of Turkey save Arab countries, too?" (<http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25298228/#storyContinued> viewed on: 25.05.2014).

In recent times, while some people claim that Turkey follows a 'soft power' foreign policy as Nye proposed the term in 2005, some others claim that as opposed to this Turkey follows a 'hard power' policy. Especially after 2010, it can be said that 'hard power' policy was valid within the framework of Syria, Iraq, Israel and Egypt policy. Of course, Erdoğan's harsh rhetoric about Israeli Prime Minister, Syrian and the Egyptian presidents led to the formation of such a perception in the public.

International relations which have the potential to change in a very short time are a set of complex relationships. Therefore, while you may follow soft power policy towards a country depending on this country's political, economic and military power, you may need to follow hard power policy towards another country or even towards the same country at different times and in different situations, seemingly inconsistent policies with each other can be followed. Indeed, Syria was seen as the enemy before 1999, with the 2000s and especially with Erdoğan and Assad's contributions two countries were regarded as

brothers and in the last few years Turkey was on the brink of war with Syria.

In contrast to passive neutrality policy followed in previous years which was a priority then, especially since the period beginning with the Prime Minister Erdoğan, Turkish Foreign Policy has experienced a significant change (Raptopoulos, 2004:2). When Turkey is considered as a continuation of Ottoman heritage, it seems more accurate to use the phrase "Power and Compassion" for this concept of active politics rather than soft or hard power. Furthermore, the effects of the Ottoman Empire and claiming this heritage is clearly noticeable in Erdoğan's diplomacy approach (Şahin, 2013: 1).

Inspired by French diplomacy, the diplomats shaped Turkish diplomacy for decades and Erdoğan defined them as 'lords' and criticized them harshly. He stated that they could not take the pulse of the people in the countries they work and they carried out their diplomatic relations from glass pavilion. He expressed the lack of public diplomacy practice which is made under international public relations as a method of public relations and used to communicate with foreign people (Yıldırım Becerikli, 2006:62). For this reason, Office of Public Diplomacy was established by the Prime Ministry Circular No. 27478 January 30, 2010 (Yağmurlu, 2007:26). In accordance with Yunus Emre Foundation Law which came into force in 2007, Yunus Emre Cultural Centers were opened to replace the existing cultural centers under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency which was opened by Turgut Özal to have a positive image in foreign countries and to establish links between the people of Turkey and other countries has also been used very effectively during Erdoğan's tenure. These institutions have prepared reports on various countries of the world and these reports have helped the Turkish diplomats and Turkish people for a much better recognition of the people of these countries. At the same time those activities should be interpreted as the strengthening soft power activities of Turkey (Nye, 2005:93). As a result of these attempts, Erdoğan made speeches to large masses even in his overseas trips to different countries.

In addition Tayyip Erdoğan is a prominent leader with his ability to create agenda. It can be calimed that he does it successfully both inside and outside Turkey. For example, he said that the Muslims had been to America 350 years before Columbus found it and his words echoed in the international media and this issue was discussed in many platforms.

In 2009 in Davos Prime Minister Erdoğan's "One Minute" reaction to Israel eliminated the perception of "insurmountable, irresistible" about Israel so far and caused especially the Arab people's great love and admiration for Erdoğan (Uslu, 2010:156). Another example, as a result of hunger and thirst caused by the drought in Somalia in 2011,

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Erdoğan directed aid campaign himself for this drama and paid a visit to Somalia. In a situation which the Western countries ignore, such an attempt by Turkey gained a great appreciation in the eyes of Somalia people (Şahin, 2013: 1). Also in 2010 for the floods in Pakistan and in 2012 for the Muslim people in difficulty in Myanmar's Arakan region, Erdoğan helped to collect large amounts of aid and enabled public awareness by issuing circulars about the aid campaigns he launched. After collecting a large amount of help, he paid a visit to both countries with his family, too.

Finally when Tokyo, which was one of the three cities together with Istanbul competing for 2020 Olympics, won the race, Erdoğan congratulated Japanese Prime Minister with a great maturity and invited him to the opening of the Marmaray which is one of Istanbul's major projects. This railway connects the Asian and European continent under the sea. Even before that, thanks to established bilateral dialogue atmosphere with Japanese Prime Minister, he was able to ask him to withdraw Tokyo from the Olympics. Erdoğan has also been able to establish an atmosphere of friendly dialogue with other presidents and prime ministers. While he is addressing prime ministers or presidents of other countries he uses phrases such as 'longtime friend, my brother, my close friend' and his using such words makes his communication more effective.

CONCLUSION

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is considered as 'charismatic leader' due to being one of the most important actors in the political life of Turkey soon after the 2001 economic crisis and because of his management and leadership properties he has shown in the last twelve years. Indeed, he has continuously increased his votes and popularity in all election races that he has entered since 1994. In the local elections held in March 2014, Erdoğan's party has made the election campaign over the name Erdoğan. In Presidential elections in August 2014, Erdoğan's charisma and leadership qualities were far ahead of the other two candidates.

In terms of foreign policy, Erdoğan claims that Turkey follows truth and justice-centered foreign policy instead of power and interest-based policies followed by materialistic world. Erdoğan's foreign policies may not be valued by the Western countries today but this situation may change for the benefit of Turkey if it keeps taking rational steps in future as well. For this reason, Turkey supported the people of Syria against a dictator and extended a helping hand to Somalia, Myanmar and Pakistan. On the other hand Turkey was able respond harshly to Israel since Turkey didn't approve of Israel's actions on Gaza and were in conflict with the USA in some situations. As a result of this approach mainly followed by the powers which follow a policy of power and interest, at various times there were some attempts to ruin the image of Erdoğan and to discredit him.

On the other hand, Erdoğan's chief foreign policy adviser Ibrahim Kalin defines this situation as "precious solitude" since Turkey has problems with some states in the Middle East and Turkey's foreign policies have been criticized. Ibrahim Kalın uses this concept in response to criticism that Turkey has become lonely and ineffective in recent years. He points out that this is a scrupulous foreign policy as the former Prime Minister also stated frequently.

Erdoğan has already become one of the most important leaders of Turkish political history. It is not unlikely for Turkey to be first regionally and then a global power if the leaders with 2023 vision follow a policy of reconciliation and social peace rather than polarization in the domestic politics and follow a foreign policy of both rational and conscientious and at the same time taking into account the interests of the country.

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