

Policy Experts as Fast-Thinker: Relationship Between Media and Turkish Conservative Think-Tanks

Umur Bedir,

Galatasaray University, Turkey

umurbedir@hotmail.com

- **Objectives of the Research:**
 - The relationship with media established by the conservative think tanks.
 - The interaction of the media and the think tank fields and the hegemonic function of such alliance.
- **Samples:** Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE), Foundation For Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA)

Method

- **In-depth Interviews:**

- Muhittin Ataman (Deputy General Coordinator, SETA Ankara Office),
- İsmail Çağlar (Assistant General Coordinator and Director of Media Department, SETA Istanbul Office),
- Birol Akgün (Chairman, SDE Ankara),
- An anonymous media professional (TRT, Ankara)

- **Visibility Analysis:**

- Media visibility of 15 high profile think tanks.
- 1st November 2015 and 30th December 2015.
- Nation-wide broadcasting TVs and newspapers.

Definitions:

- **Think-tanks** are organizations or institutions that are engaged in policy-oriented research and analysis to influence public opinion or public policy.
- **Conservative Think Tank:** In Turkish Context, a think tank may be labelled ‘conservative’ if it positions itself in conservative ‘Power Bloc’, funded by ‘Muslim-Anatolian Capital Groups’, promotes national, traditional and religious values, emphasizes national security and national interests against individual rights and liberties.

Think Tanks In Turkey

- Classification of Turkish think tanks according to their ideologies: ‘liberal’, ‘nationalist’, ‘conservative’, ‘nationalist-conservative’ and ‘without a definite ideology’.
- There are 38 active and non governmental think tank organisations in Turkey.
- 18 of them are conservative and nationalist-conservative.
- 11 of them are close to the AKP (ruling conservative party) paradigm.

Foundation For Political, Economic And Social Research,2005 (SETA)

- Has about 100 staff.
- Staff consist of academics and post-graduate students.
- Has 7 research programmes.
- Has 4 Offices: Ankara, Istanbul, Washington DC and Cairo.
- Funded by Muslim/Anatolian capital Groups, Governmental Institutions.
- Describes itself as a Conservative think tank.
- Target audiences: Policy-makers and general public.

Institute of Strategic Thinking, 2009 (SDE)

- Has about 30 staff.
- Staff consist of academics and post-graduate students.
- Has 5 research programmes.
- Has an offices in Ankara.
- Funded Muslim/Anatolian capital Groups, Governmental Institutions.
- Describes itself as a Conservative think tank and “Vision Center of The New Turkey”.
- Target audiences: General public and policy-makers.

Fast-Thinker

Pierre Bourdieu describes mediatic experts as fast thinker.

- Serves media as available commentators in emergency situations
- Thinks in clichés and ‘Received ideas’.
- Responses to expectations of media.

Expectations of Media From Think Tanks or Their Experts

- They should be eager to be visible.
- Their views should be predictable.
- They should respond to urgent agendas as quickly as possible.
- They should speak on different topics, including issues outside their field of expertise.

Visibility Analysis

| NAME | Visibility on TV | TV Channels | Visibility On NP. | Newspapers | TOTAL VISIBILITY |
|---|------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Fundation For Political Economic and Social Research (SETA) | 118 | -TRT Haber* (43) -A Haber* (38) -TVNet* (15) -24* (8) | 77 | -Sabah&Daily Sabah* (10) -Milat* (9) -Akşam* (7) -Yeni Şafak* (6) | 195 60,51% TV |
| Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE) | 77 | -TRT Haber* (37) -Haberturk (8) -CNNTurk (7) -TVNet* (5) -Ulke TV*(4) | 36 | -Star* (5) -YeniAkit*(5) -Yeni Şafak* (3) -Gunes* (3) -Dirilis Postasi* (3) | 113 68,14% TV |

*Conservative and pro-government newspapers and TV channels.

| NAME | Visibility On TV | TV Channels | Visibility On NP. | Newspapers | TOTAL VISIBILITY |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) (Liberal) | 15 | -NTV (5) -CNN Turk (4) | 97 | -Hurriyet (16) -Dunya (15) -Ekonomi Gazetesi (7) -Sabah* (5) -Zaman (5) | 112 %13,39 TV |
| Internatinal Strategic Research Organization (USAK) | 18 | -CNN Turk (7) -NTV (3) | 20 | -Sabah* (2) -Posta (2) -Star*(2) -YeniYuzyl*(2) | 38 %47.36 TV |
| Center For Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) | 4 | -CNN Turk (3) -Haberturk (2) | 26 | -Hurriyet (3) -Yeni Safak*(3) -Dirilis Postasi* (3) | 30 %13.33 TV |

*Conservative and pro-government newspapers and TV channels.

Giving response to immediate agendas (01.11.2015 - 30.11.2015)

| AGENDA | Date-Time | SETA | SDE |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Parlamentary Elections in Turkey | 01.11.2015 | 2 Experts attended 3 live broadcasts in the same day. | 2 Experts attended 3 live broadcasts in the same day. |
| Terror Attack In Paris | 13.11.2015 22:16 | 4 Experts attended 5 live Broadcasts in 14.11.2016 (3 TV Channels) First Response: 09:17 | 3 Experts attended 5 live Broadcasts in 14.11.2016 (5 TV Channels) First Response: 08:30 |
| Russian warplain shot down by Turkish Forces | 24.11.2015 09:24 | 3 Experts attended 4 live Broadcasts during the same day. (2 TV Channels) First Response: 10:04 | 2 Experts attended 5 live Broadcasts during the same day. (3 TV Channels) First Response: 10:30 |

Most Visible Think Tank Experts (More Than 10 Times on TVs)

| EXPERTS (SETA) | Position | Field of Expertise | TOTAL VISIBILITY |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Fahrettin Altun (Dr.) | General Coordinator, Istanbul | Sociology (Media and Communication Sociology) | 16 |
| Ufuk Ulutaş | Director of Foreign Policy Program | Foreign Policy | 15 |
| Burhanettin Duran (Prof.) | General Coordinator | Political Science and International Relations | 12 |
| Murat Yeşiltaş (Dr.) | Director of Security Program | Political Science and International Relations | 11 |

| EXPERTS (SDE) | Position | Field of Expertise | TOTAL VISIBILITY |
|--------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Mehmet Şahin (Prof.) | Vise Chairman, Coordinator of Foreign Policy and International Relations Program | International Relations (Middle East) | 25 |
| Birol Akgün (Prof.) | Chairman | Political Sciences | 22 |
| Murat Yılmaz (Dr.) | Coordinator of Domestic Policy and Democratization Program | Political Sciences | 11 |