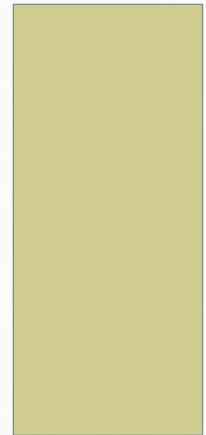


TERRORISM STUDIES

MAPPING TERRORISM COURSES AT
TOP-RANKED NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES &
LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES IN THE US

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overview

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- context: controversy & critiques

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- research questions

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- methods

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- results

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- conclusions

context

- 9/11 & resurgence of interest in terrorism
- ↑ dissertations
- ↑ publications
- ↑ homeland security & terrorism studies programs

controversy

“a booming field”

“unruly, unbounded”

“barely at
interstices of
academia”

“on the way to
becoming a discipline”

critiques

- No consistent definition of “terrorism”
- Insufficient rigor in research
- Too sympathetic to terrorism
- Too state-centric & security focused

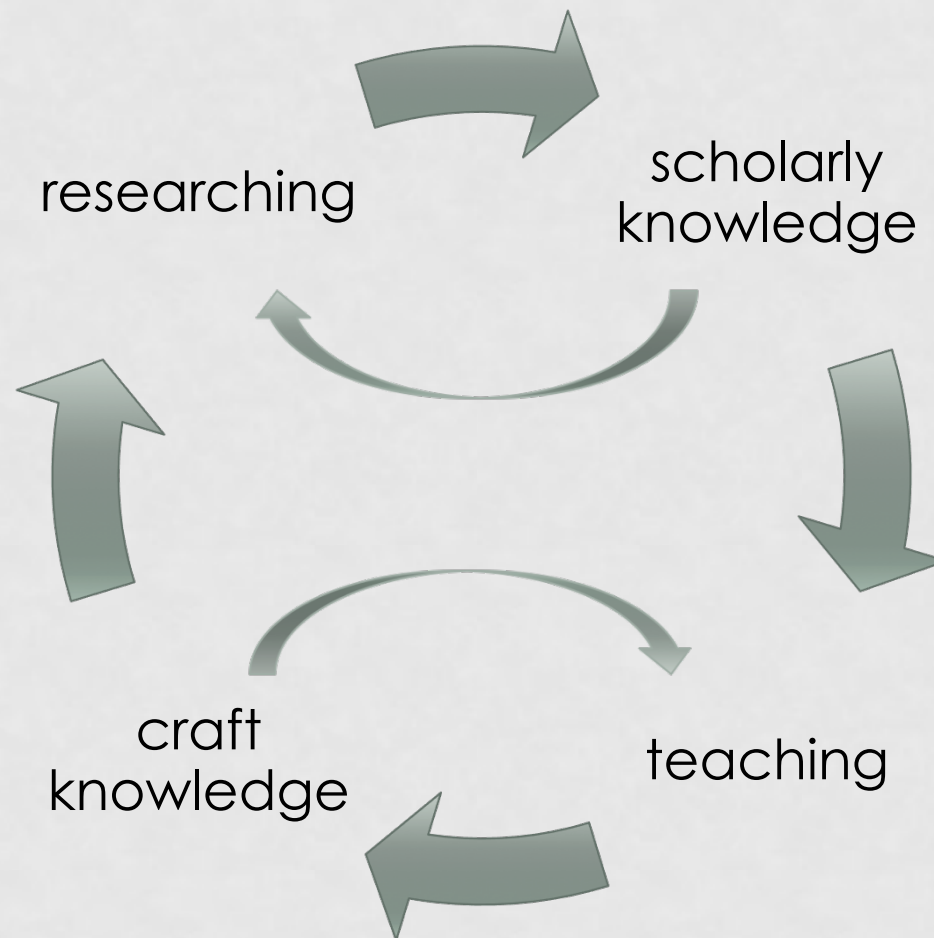
How are America's top universities & colleges, the ones that usually set trends, handling this situation?

Most of the scholarly work

focus on research (knowledge production)

not on teaching (knowledge dissemination)

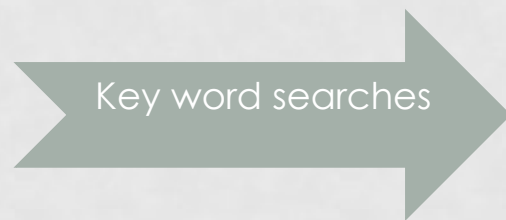
research & teaching



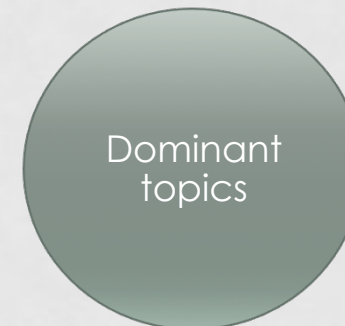
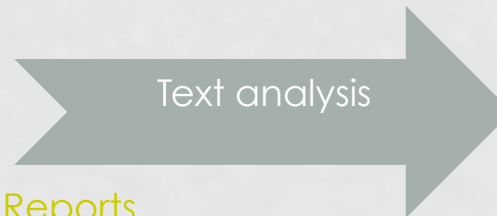
questions

1. How **committed** are America's top academic institutions to terrorism studies?
 - How many offer **distinct** terrorism courses?
 - How many only offer courses with terrorism **content**?
 - **Disciplinary** differences?
2. Which institutions are the **powerhouses**?
 - Which offer the **most** courses?
 - How many offer a **core** e.g. ≥ 4 courses?
3. Do **institutional** characteristics matter?
4. What are the **dominant topics**?

methods

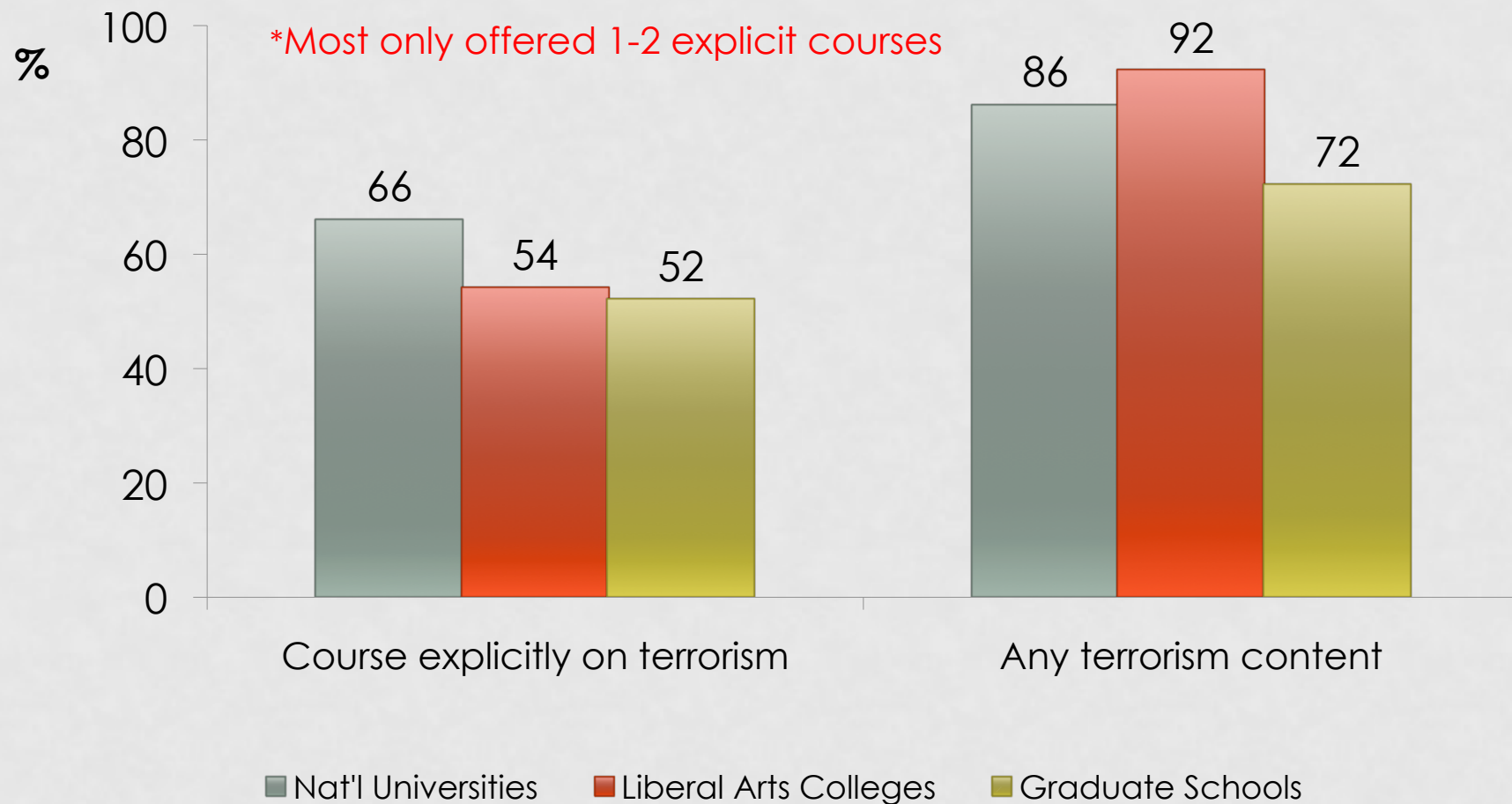


- 80 top national universities
- 26 top liberal arts colleges [US News & World Reports 2010-2011](#)



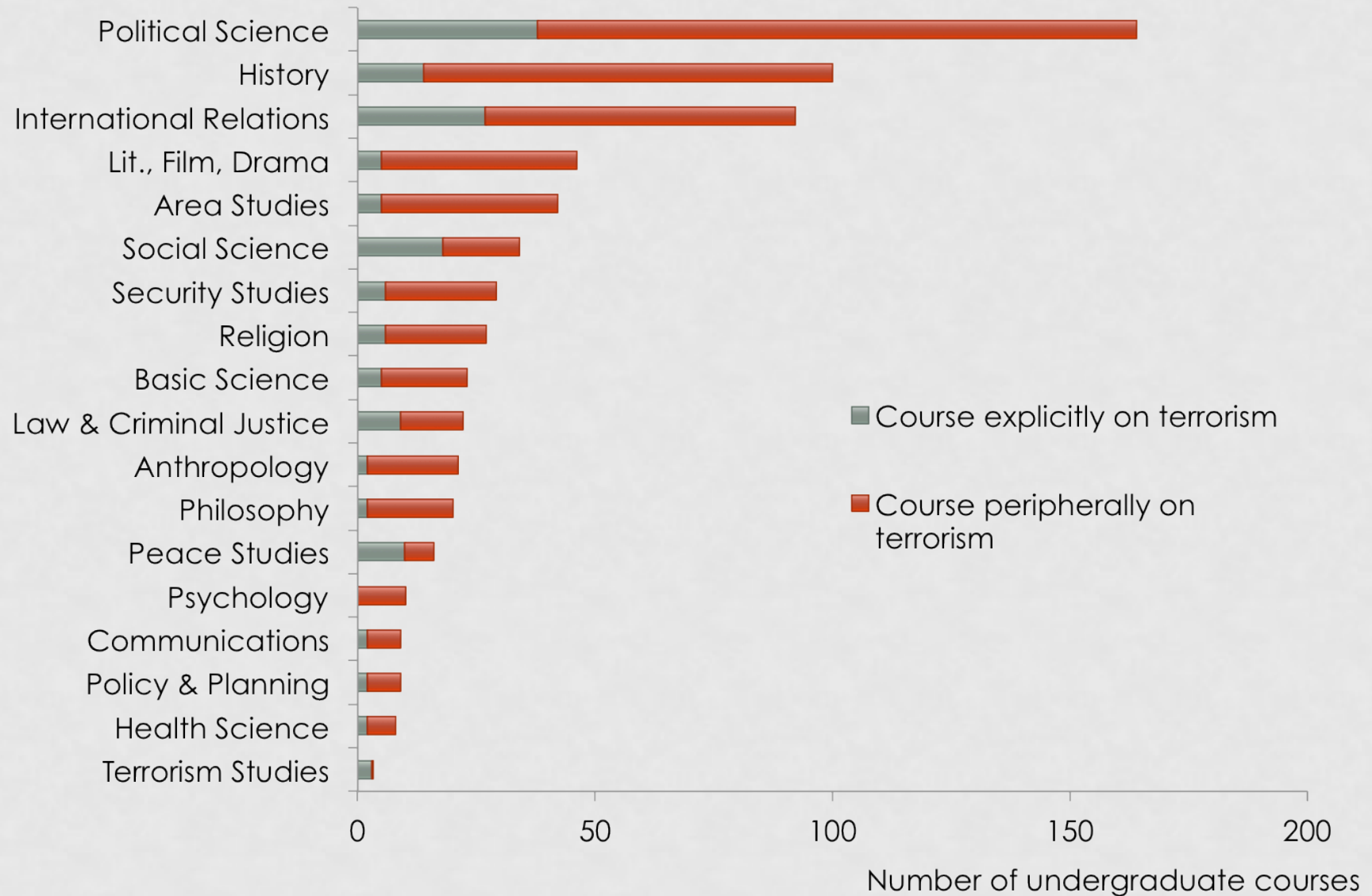
results: commitment

% with at least 1 terrorism course



1,180 courses (689 UG courses + 491 graduate courses)
for the 106 institutions (80 nat'l universities + 26 liberal arts colleges)

results: number of terrorism courses by academic discipline



results: powerhouses: most courses explicitly on terrorism

Undergraduate		# courses
21% had ≥ 4 courses	Georgetown	11
	Penn State	7
	UNC – Chapel Hill	7
	Notre Dame	7
	Duke	6
	Ohio State	6
	U Southern California	5
Graduate		# courses
17% had ≥ 4 courses	Georgetown	18
	George Washington U	10
	Johns Hopkins	7
	U Chicago	7
	U Maryland –College Park	7
	Penn State	6

Academic Year 2010-2011

results: powerhouses:
most courses with content on terrorism

Undergraduate		# courses
	Georgetown	45
	Notre Dame	42
	Stanford	25
	UCLA	16
	Northeastern	15
	U Washington	15
	Wesleyan	14
	Harvard	13
Graduate		# courses
	Georgetown	105
	Harvard	29
	New York University	24
	George Washington University	23
	Boston University	20
	Northeastern	18
	UCLA	18

Academic Year 2010-2011

institutional characteristics

& number of terrorism courses – **undergraduate** level

- Terrorism scholar
- Size student body
- Security studies
- Peace studies
- Region

Dependent Variable		Standardized coefficient	t	p
Explicit courses				
	Terrorism scholar	1.0	4.4	0.0001*
	Size	0.5	2.3	0.02*
	Peace studies	0.4	1.9	0.06
	Security studies	0.4	1.8	0.08
	Region (Mid-Atlantic)	0.5	1.8	0.08
		R=0.38, F(5,100)=12.1, p<0.0001		
All courses				
	Terrorism scholar	2.9	3.4	0.0001*
	Peace studies	1.9	2.7	0.009*
	Region (South)	-1.6	2.5	0.03*
		R=0.24, F(3,102)=10.7, p<0.0001		

Academic Year 2010-2011

institutional characteristics

& number of terrorism courses – **graduate** level

- Region
- Terrorism research center
- Security studies

Dependent Variable		Standardized coefficient	t	p
Primary courses				
	Region (Mid-Atlantic)	1.7	4.6	0.0001*
	Terrorism research center	0.7	3.0	0.004*
	Security studies	0.7	3.1	0.002*
		R=0.43, F(3,71)=18.1, p<0.0001		
All courses				
	Region (Mid-Atlantic)	2.8	2.1	0.04*
	Region (Northeast)	1.7	2.4	0.02*
	Terrorism research center	1.7	2.1	0.04*
	Security studies			
		R=0.25, F(4,70)=6.0, p<0.0004		

results: dominant topics



Courses explicitly on terrorism



Courses peripherally on terrorism

limitations

1. a snapshot - 1 academic year
2. small sample
3. cross listing
4. variability in catalog texts

future research needs

- Larger range of colleges & universities
- Cross national studies
- Studies of change in curricula over time
- Qualitative studies

conclusions

1

- commitment = visible but cautious

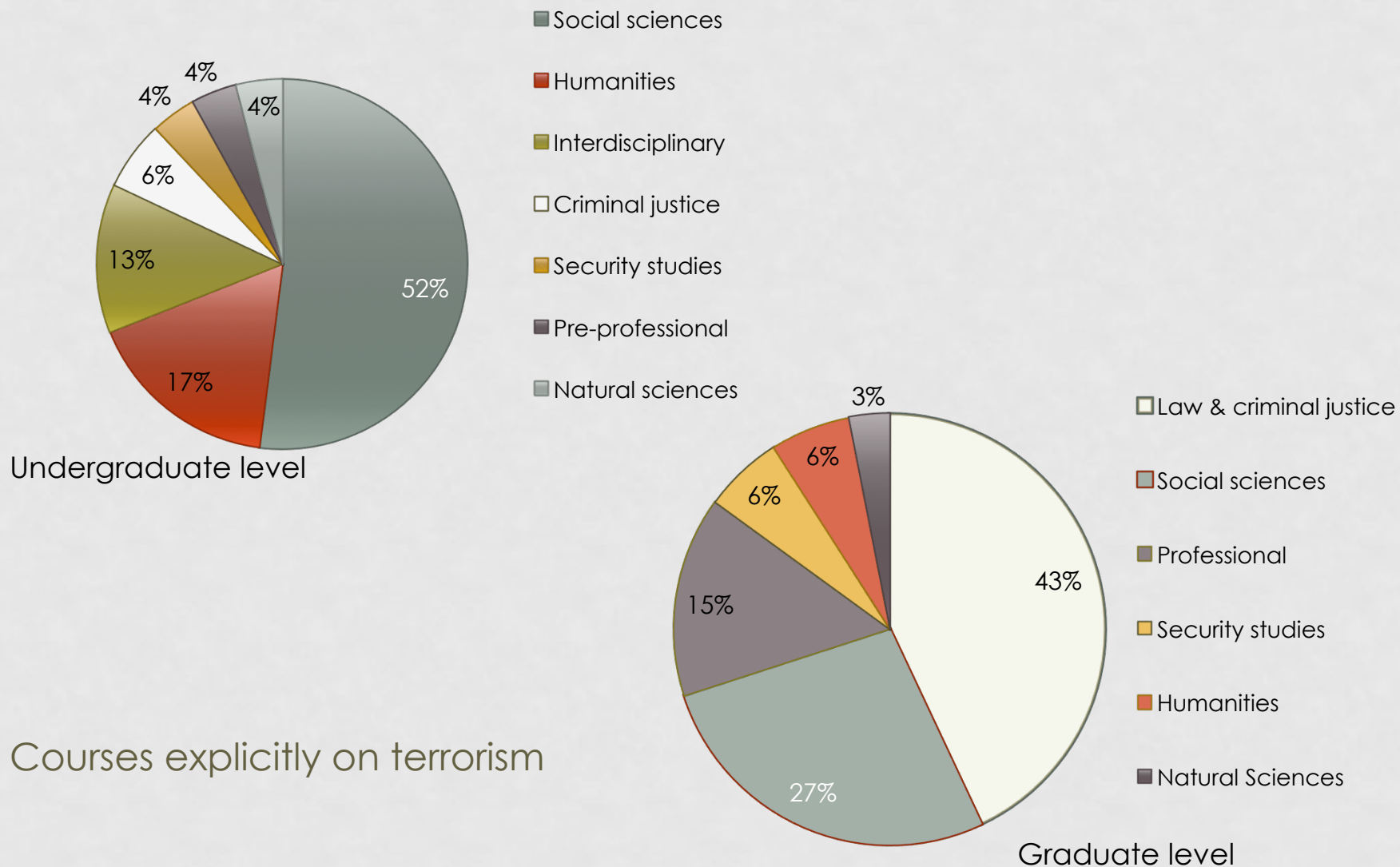
2

- 2 orientations

3

- future research needs

Results: distribution of terrorism courses



number terrorism courses by discipline

