

Reporting terrorism in Northern and Southern Europe:

The case of online newspapers in Germany, UK, Greece and Turkey

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Covering terrorism (I)

- Terrorist acts are «bad news» (Gerbner 1979, Schmid 1989, Chemak & Brown 2003, Alali 1991, Wilkinson 1997):
 - They attract media interest
- Importance of media coverage (Bennett 2003)
 - Reflect the views and stances of all or at least a significant part of public opinion
 - Influence public opinion and attitudes towards “terrorism” and the “war on terrorism”
 - Can set/influence the political agenda (Weimann 1993, Nacos 1994)

Terrorism and the media

- Difficulties in defining terrorism (Tuman 2003, Begin 2006, Bosi 1996, Paschos 2005)
- However terrorism can be conceived as :
 - a) practice – non institutional- political/psychological/economic/symbolic- violence
 - b) domestic as well as international (through globalization)
 - c) aiming at defending ways of life - not only the achievement of political solutions
 - d) media oriented
- In “media societies”, terrorism = violence + communication, (Maringela 2002, Morsoni 2002, Hacker 1980 Zulaika & Douglass 1996)
 - The “amplification effect” (Combs and Slann 2007)
 - A result of both the propagandistic logic of terrorist organisations and infotainment
 - More attractive to commercial media systems
- Media shift from the domestic, revolutionary terrorism to «new wars» (Kaldor, 1999), where it is difficult to discern between domestic-international relations, war- terrorism, religious – political objectives.

Covering terrorism (II)

Important parameters

- The domestication/introversion (Hjarvard, 2001, Clausen, 2004) of the news
 - is limited in the case of the `new wars`
 - In the North, the attention is on international terrorism. The opposite happens in the South, particularly in Greece
- Media “rally behind the flag” (Lehman 2003)
- Media’s ideology influences their coverage of terrorism
- More political logic - less dramatization in the Internet, than in traditional media (Hewitt 2005).
 - However, in countries of the South, particularly Greece, dramatization is higher

Research Question

Which are the characteristics and differences of the coverage of terrorism in the online media of northern and southern European countries?

Research Hypotheses

1. Terrorist attacks, as «bad news», attract lots of attention from the Internet (too).
2. Media attention shifts from the “revolutionary” terrorism to the new forms of terrorism, in particular towards «international», «islamic» terrorism. This is more evident in the North, than in the south.
3. Media’s attitude is formulated according to their political and ideological identity. International terrorism is more intense in the conservative media.
4. The extent and the intensity of negative opinions of journalists towards terrorism are more intense in the conservative media
5. Verbal Dramatization is low, though high in Greece and Turkey (countries of the south).

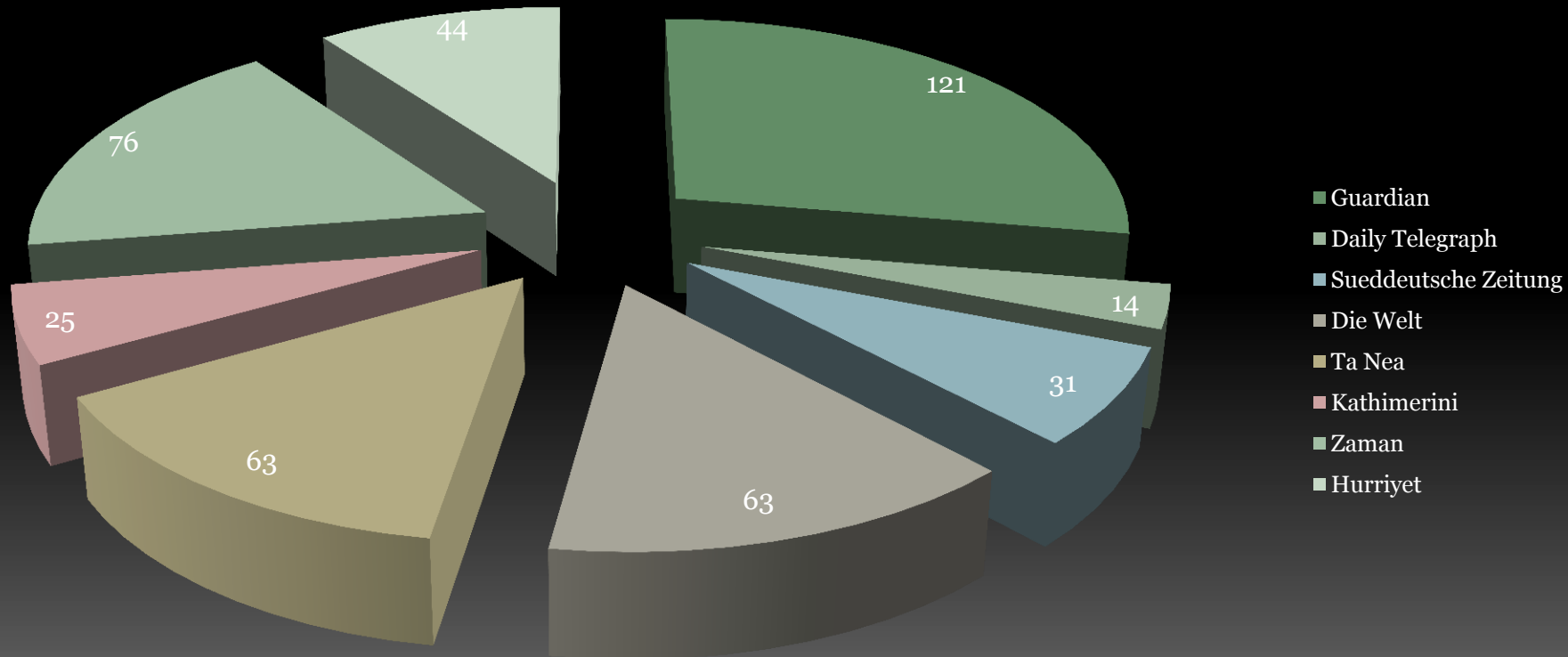
Research outline

- Method: Quantitative content analysis with a limited discourse analysis with the use of research protocol
- Media selected: 4 countries (UK, Germany, Greece, Turkey)
 - 2 newspapers from each country (1 center-left, 1 center-right)
 - Greece: a) TA NEA b) Kathimerini
 - Turkey: a) Hurriyet b) Zaman (English language portals)
 - UK: a) The Guardian b) Daily Telegraph
 - Germany: a) Sueddeutsche Zeitung b) Die Welt
- Sample: 10% of the articles referring- at least and- to terrorism, between July 2009 and July 2010. Articles were selected using the search bar of each site with the keyword “terrorism” (Terrorismus, tromokratia)
- The articles were coded and analysed using SPSS 17
- The credibility of the data input by the coders was tested using the North, Holsti, Zaninovich and Zinnes coders’ reliability test

1. *Rather frequent representation of terrorism*

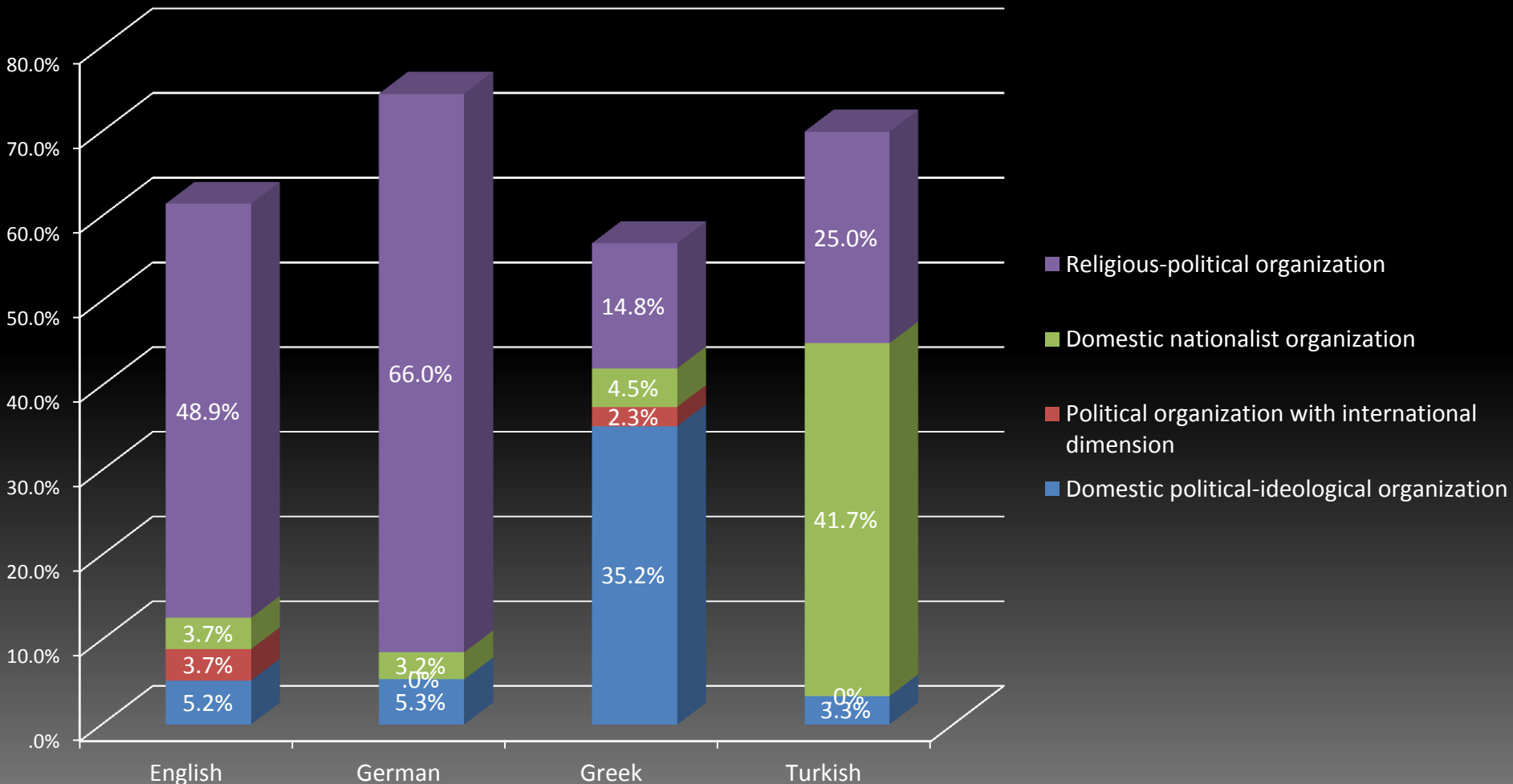
An average of 0,4 articles per day (Daily Telegraph) to 3 articles per day (Guardian)

Number of articles in each site



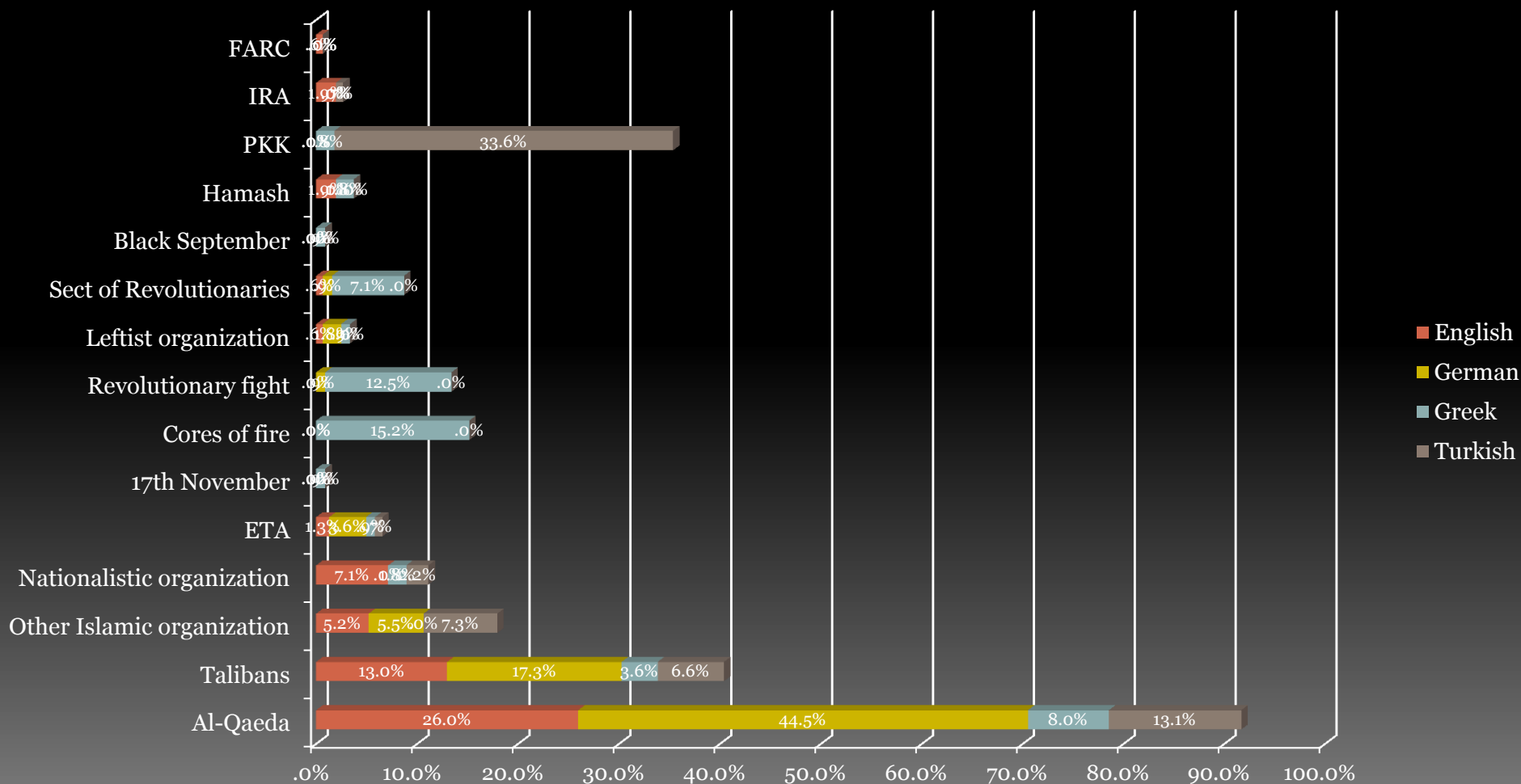
2. Religious political (and international) terrorism in the North, local terrorism in the south (I)

Ideological identity of the terrorists per ethnicity of the newspaper



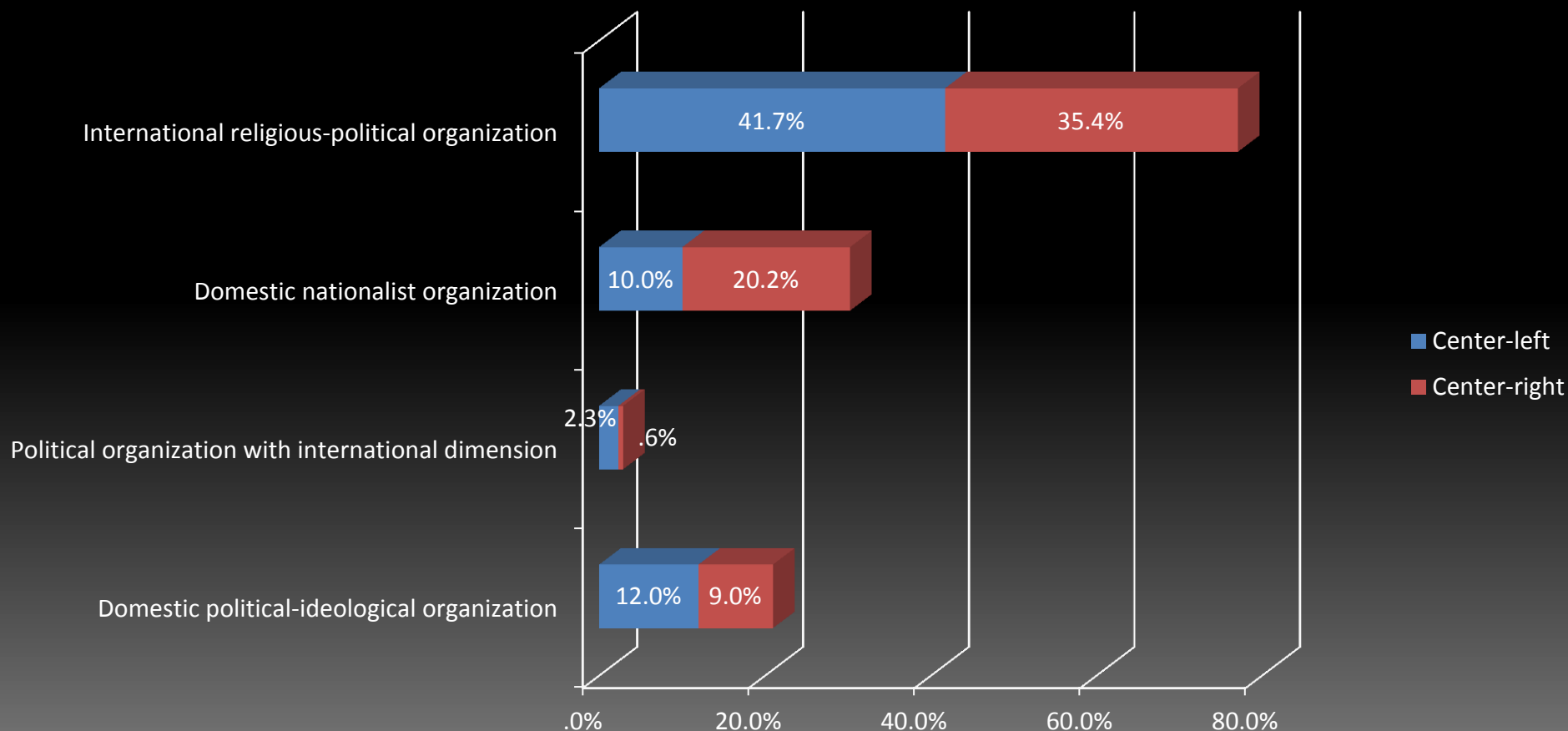
Religious political (and international) terrorism in the North, local terrorism in the south (II)

Organizations mentioned per ethnicity of the newspaper



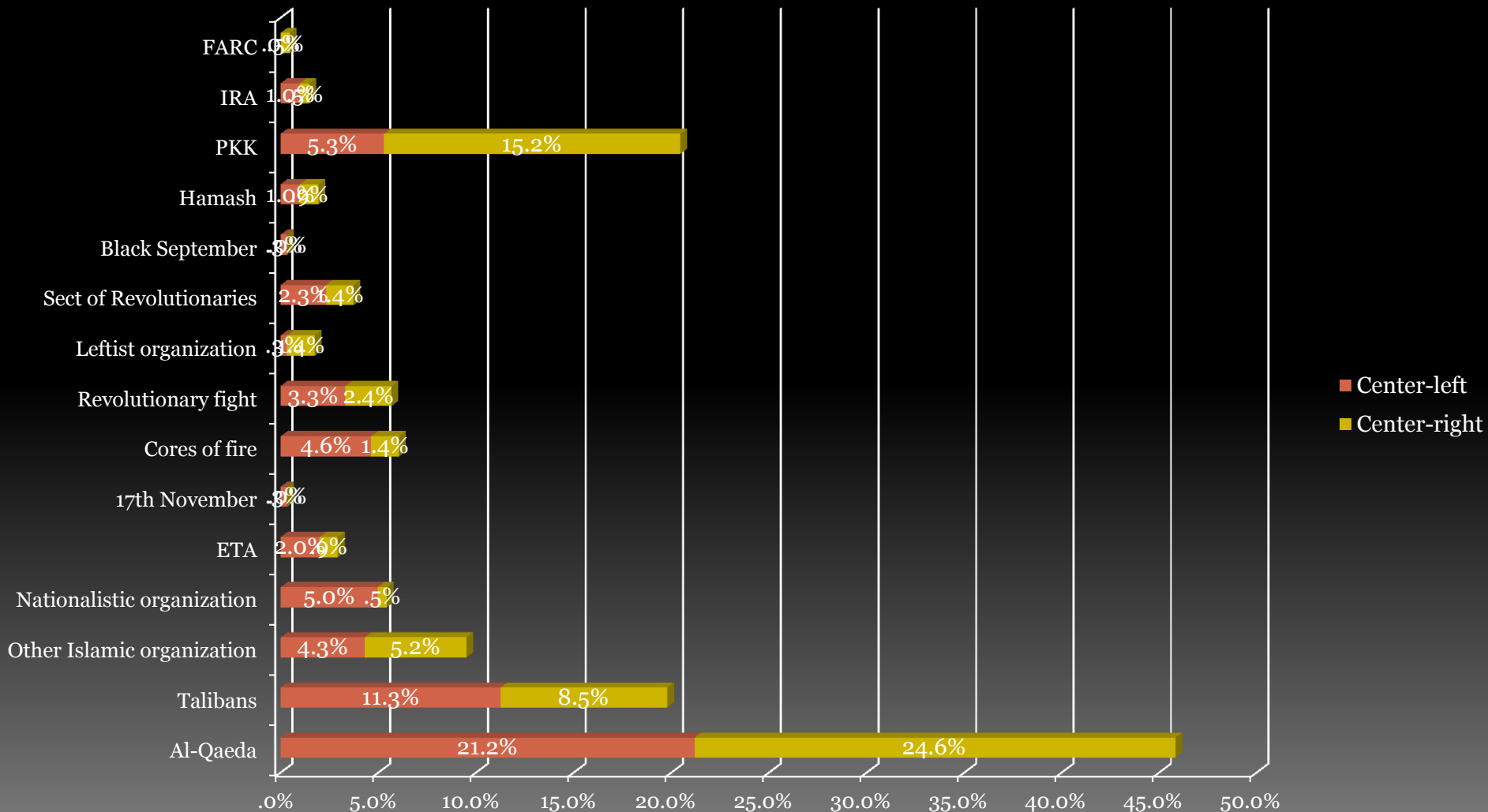
3. In addition, ideology of the terrorist organizations appears to “connect” to the ideology of the news site (I)

Ideology of terrorists per ideology of the site



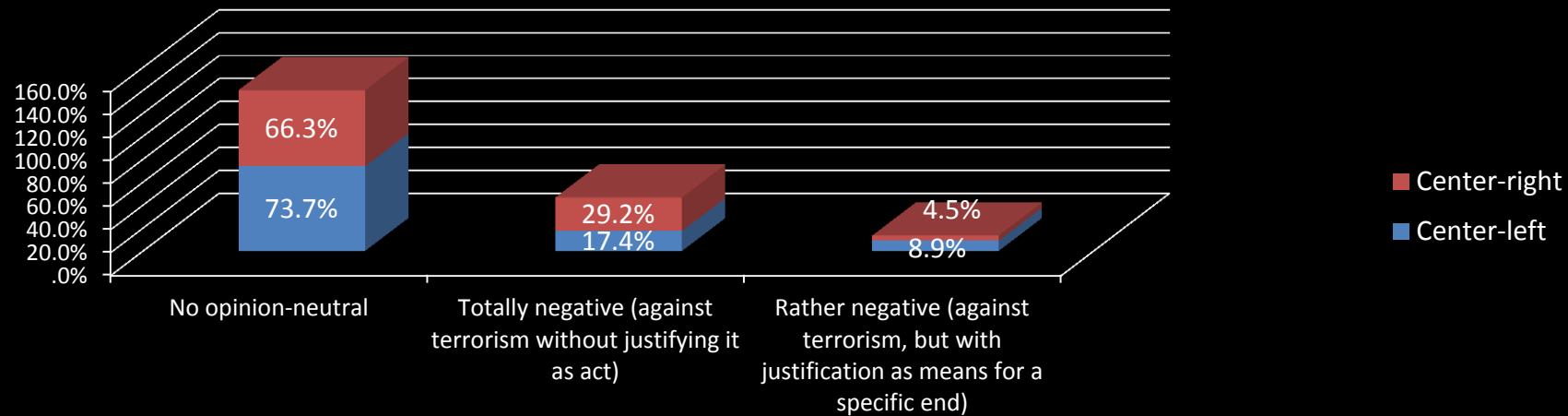
Ideology of the presented terrorist organizations appears to “connect” to the ideology of the news site (II)

Terrorist organizations per ideology of the site

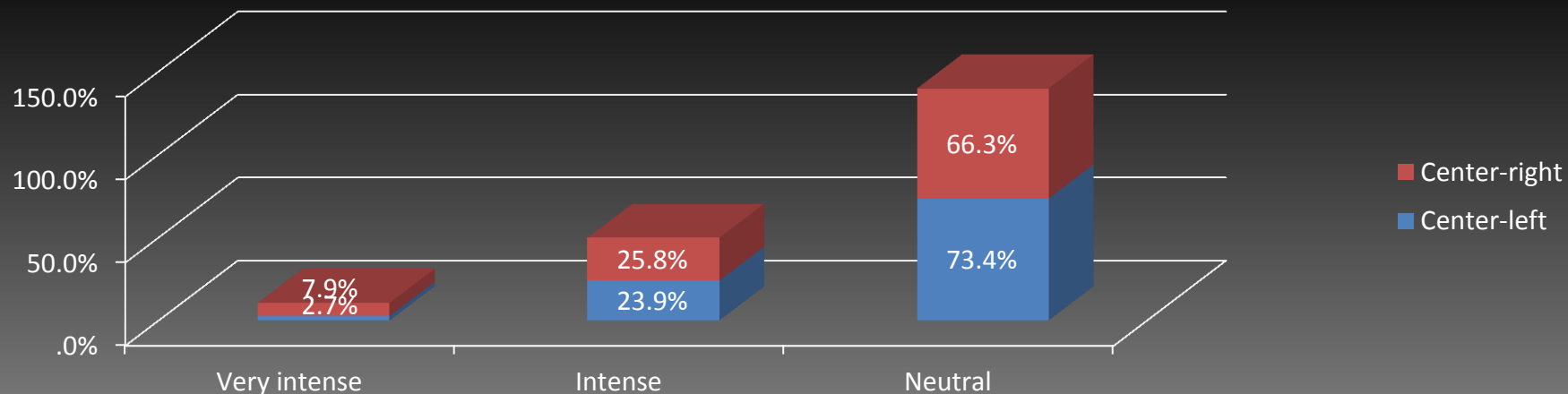


4. Center- right newspapers appear more intensely against terrorism (statistically significant relationship)

Opinion towards terrorism per ideology

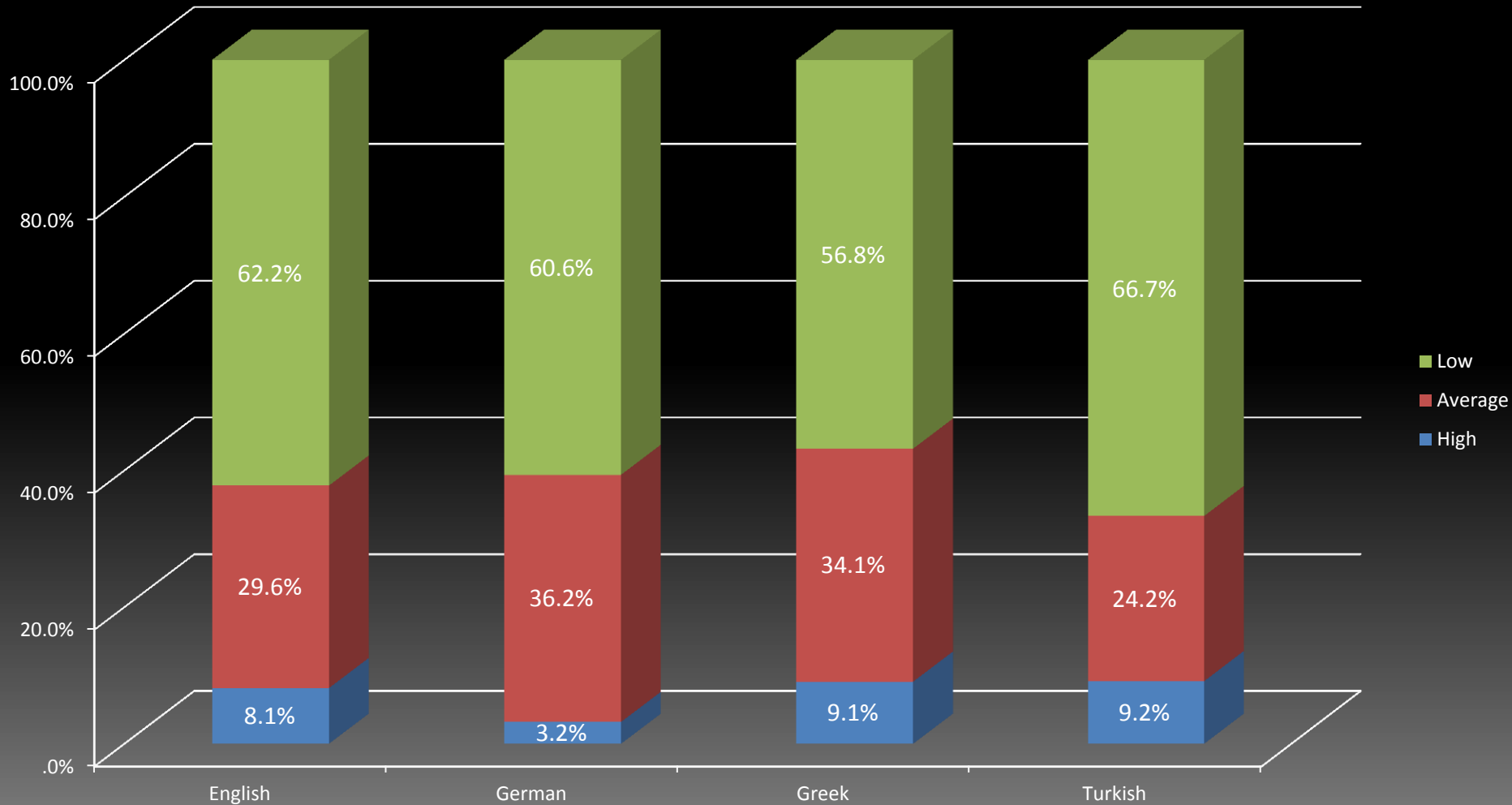


Intensity of opinions towards terrorism per ideology



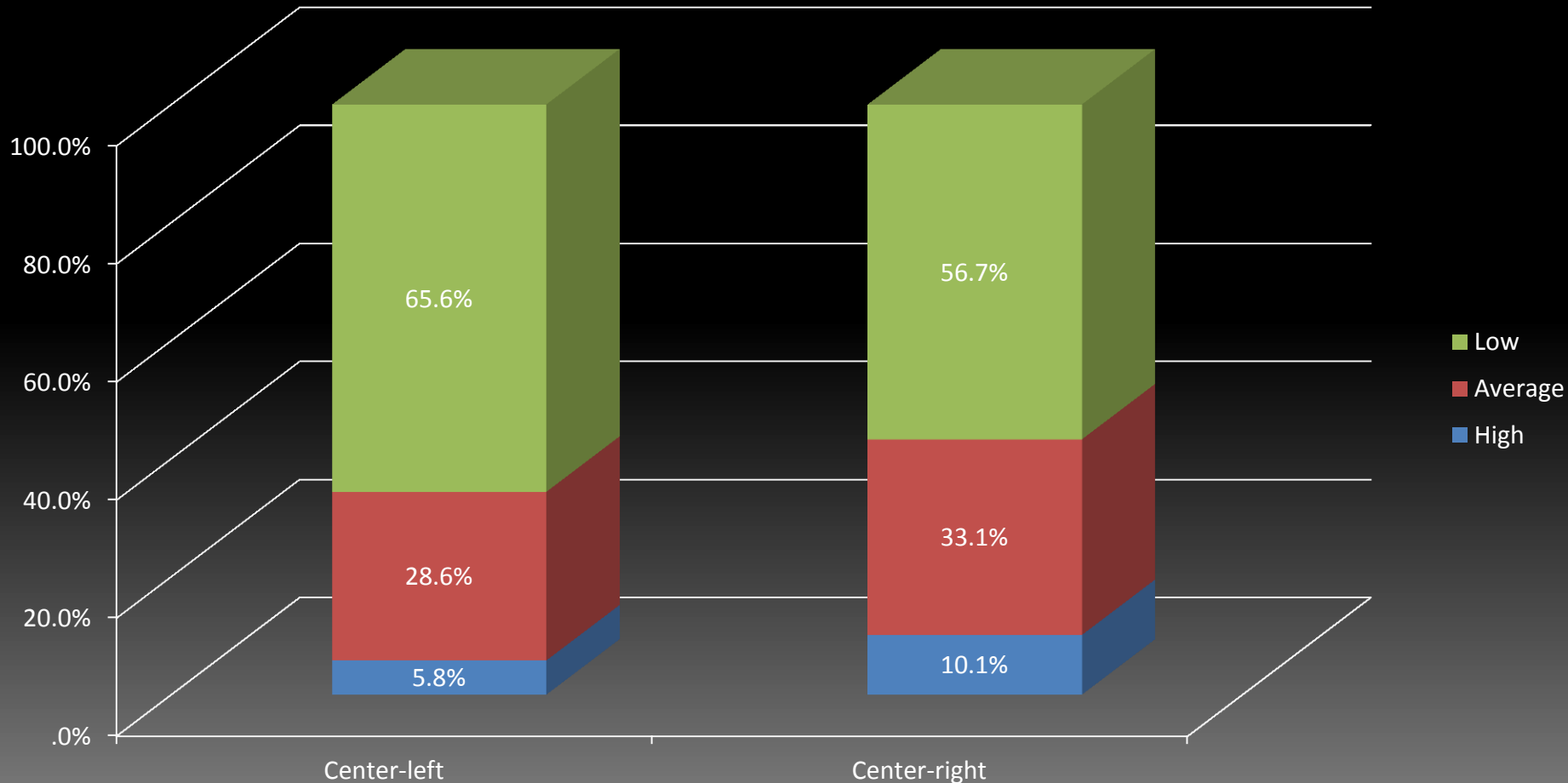
5. Dramatization doesn't appear higher in the south

Verbal dramatization per ethnicity of the site



Dramatization doesn't appear to differ between different ideologies

Verbal dramatization per ideology of the site



Conclusions

- Terrorism ,‘bad news’, is covered by the media quite extensive (1st hypothesis)
- “Northern” news sites focus more on the international Islamic terrorism (2nd hypothesis).
- There is a significant relationship between the ideology of the medium and the ideology of terrorists mentioned (3rd hypothesis).
- Both the opinion on terrorism and the intensity of that opinion differ significantly between center-left and center-right newspapers (4th hypothesis)
- Verbal dramatization does not differ significantly between “northern” and “southern” reports on terrorism (5th hypothesis). Same stands for the ideological division of the online newspapers
- *In short, terrorism (including ‘war against terrorism’) becomes a significant media issue per se, despite its various ideological and stylistic interpretations .*

Limitations of current research

- Specific countries, more countries needed for comparison between “north” and “south”
- Single period of time. A more diachronical projection of terrorism’s presentation should include more than one periods of time (comparative research)

Further Research Proposal

- Inclusion of articles from Russia and former eastern countries

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
TIME AND KIND
ATTENTION