

Terrorism in the United States & the Middle East:
A Comparative Look

Introduction to Sociology

Brandon Jenkins
Spring 2012

Information

Based on secondary information & stereotypes, the American population tends to view Middle Eastern terrorists as “lunatics”, “crazies”, and regard them as uneducated, fanatics, and loners. However, what makes them different than domestic terrorism groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, ELO, and others? Using Chapter 2 (Culture), Chapter 5 (Networks & Groups), and Chapter 6 (Race & Ethnicity); I would like you to compare/contrast American domestic terrorism to that of the broader stereotype of Middle Eastern terrorism.

In doing this, you are going to need to select 2 movies which illustrate these 2 very distinct, but similar groups. One movie must look at terrorism from a homegrown and domestic perspective, while the other should look at terrorism from a Middle Eastern point of view. Movies that I would recommend are *Arlington Road*, *The Siege*, *The Green Zone*, and *Arna's Children* among many others. You may also want to refer back to The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil by Philip Zimbardo, particularly chapter 12.

After watching your selected movies, you are to write a compare/contrast paper in which you address the following questions. Your paper should be 4 pages, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman with 1 inch margins.

1. In detail, discuss the portrayal of the terrorists in each of your selected movies? How, if at all, did the domestic terrorists conform to our cultural standards in terms of norms, style of dress, speech, overall values, and beliefs? What about the Middle Eastern terrorists; how does their culture put them at odds with our American culture? Which were you more afraid of? Why?
2. In what ways, if any, were the American domestic terror groups and international terror groups similar? Who were their common enemies? In this sense, enemies may refer to a broader explanation of institutions, policies, government, etc. Please provide examples to support your answer. Feel free to do outside research to add depth to your argument?
3. Based on information learned in this course, who is more of a threat to the United States: domestic terrorism or international terrorism. In your explanation, compare and contrast domestic and international terrorism. Also, please indicate whether either type of terrorism is subject to defeat. Or, in a free society such as ours, must we simply learn to live with the annoyance and tragedies of ideological, political, and/or religiously-motivated violence?
4. How has your perspective of terrorism changed? Have any of your previous stereotypes concerning Middle Eastern terrorism changed?
5. Please use MLA style with your works cited page. Any and all movies watched need to be noted, as well as, any online sources that you may use.