

# The movie the hunger games



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The movie, *The Hunger Games* takes place in a totalitarian-like nation called Panem and it's 13 districts. The Capitol of Panem, is a utopian city that oversees all the districts and is governed by the dictator, President Snow. The citizens that reside in the capitol are amongst the wealthiest and most influential individuals within Panem, the citizens here are known for their extravagant lifestyle and over the top sense of style.

Meanwhile, the citizens of each district work hard to provide the Capitol and it's resident with the resources needed to maintain their lifestyles. Having to export everything to the Capitol, leaves the district citizens with little to nothing to survive off. Panem used to have 13 Districts but after a rebellion in District 13 broke out, President Snow released toxic bombs onto District 13 and now only 12 Districts remain. As a means of instilling fear and destroying the citizens' sense of Hope, President Snow created and built a televised arena to host an annual competition, known as the Hunger Games. This competition consisted of 1 male and 1 female from each District, for a total of 24 participants and they were sent into a televised arena to fight for their lives, as there could only be one victor. The games went on uninterrupted until the 74th Annual games, when Katniss Everdeen volunteered to take her sister's place. This act of love gave other's hope and it was that small amount of hope that started a new revolution. Based on the summary, one would assume that Social Conflict Theory would best fit this movie, but let us first explore all three paradigms and then determine the best fitting paradigm for *The Hunger Games*. The first paradigm, Functionalism Theory advocated by Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim; it sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote

stability and social order. These different parts, known as social structures, are seen as fulfilling specific social functions. For example, the purpose of family is to fulfill the role of socializing children and in turn teach them how to live within society.

In the film, Katniss' father passed away and left behind two daughters and a widow. Due to the lack of a father, Katniss steps up and assigns herself that paternal role. When this role is reassigned, Katniss unknowingly is proving her family with attention, emotional support and protection within her family. Another example of functionalism, is the role each District provides the Capitol with. Each district is in charge of providing the Capitol with a specific resource and together, all the districts help provide for the Capitol. Seeing as the Capitol is the sole controller of Panem and its' districts, it maintains order by setting up an effervescent government, strict caste system and shared norms, ideas and values. In the eyes of the Capitol, the rules are set up fairly to favor both the elites and the districts and allows people to believe in this disillusioned belief that if people work really hard, they too can move up the ranks.

The second paradigm Conflict Theory, is advocated by Karl Marx. Conflict theorists imagine society as being composed of different groups that struggle over limited resources such as status, power, money, land, etc. This view sees change as being fundamental to society. The entire premise behind this movie is the class-conflict between the two classes, the Capitolist who have immense wealth, influence and power and the Districts who have to work to barely survive. This way of life works for some time but eventually resistance is bound to take place. This resistance forced the Capitol to take

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severe actions on its' own people, as a means to ensure balance was restored. The use of the Annual Hunger Games functions to intimidate and isolate the districts, provide entertainment for the Capitolists and give hope to the participants that they would be that one remaining victor. Lastly, Interactionist paradigms advocated by George Mead, Charles Cooley and Erving Goffman. Interactionism focuses on people's individual social situations, and the meaning that they attach to them. Interactionism understands society as the product of everyday social interactions, such as the shared reality that people create through interactions. Interactionists see society as a large group of people interacting with one another. The Capitol is the epicenter of the Districts, and it closely monitors everything around them. It sees when police presence is needed to teach district residents about respect and order and that they are to follow orders not matter what. Another example of symbolic interactionism is the main character, Katniss Everdeen; she is the symbol for change, fire, destruction and rebellion and is nicknamed the mockingjay. She unintentionally goes against all norms, provides people with a sense of hope and sees what's wrong with the world. During the televised games, Katniss shows remorse towards a fellow competitor by giving the competitor a proper burial. This act of selflessness hadn't been seen in previous games and everyone is shocked when they see that not everyone lacks humanity.

At the end of the film, Katniss decided to one again go against the rules and decides that for this year's games there will either be two or no victors.

Based on the three paradigms presented, the movie The Hunger Games is vastly represented by Social Conflict Theory. The film revolves around the

idea that change is needed in order to maintain a form of social order within the districts. This change stems from President Snow's totalitarian regime, where he has divided Panem into the Capitol and the Districts. The uses of the Annual Hunger Games and PeaceKeepers (police presence), allows the Capitol to remain in power by having total control of the districts and their resources. The difference in power, allows capitol resident to feel at ease as they do not need to send volunteers to the game. While, district residents have no choice but to participate in the random selection process. Another form of conflict theory is the characters' appearances based on clothing. Capitalists have these outrageously, colorful and standout outfits while the districts have on grey colored clothes. Conflict theory revolves around the idea that social order is derived from superiority rather than unity and obedience.